

University and College Union

To Council
From Margaret Phelan
Date Oct 2013
Agenda Item 4
For Agreement
Subject Wales Organising Strategy 2013/14

1. Much of what we achieved last year was framed by the need to engage with the national (UK) recruitment activity, it will be the same again this year. For a number of years our strategy has focussed particularly on the key areas of Recognition, Facilities and Mapping.
2. We are now close to achieving our goals in relation to Recognition and Facilities; there is one recognition agreement outstanding in FE and two recognition agreements in HE. We understand that all but three institutions in HE have facilities agreements in place although we are awaiting receipt of some signed agreements. In FE merged institutions will need to update their facilities agreements to ensure comparability amongst representatives. We would also remind you to include time off for national roles as NEC representatives.
3. Mapping remains one of our key priorities going forward. We are expanding the strategy to build on the maps already produced by branches and encourage their use as an organising tool. The key will be to have sustainable structures in place to ensure succession planning and to maintain and improve membership density. As outlined in our Support Document, membership density is key to our effectiveness as negotiators in securing decent terms and conditions for our members.

Organising Priorities

Priority 1 – Recruitment Drive

4. In line with a UK wide Campaign we are asking branches to continue to focus their efforts on recruitment, specifically
 - Identify and target non-members
 - Hold regular recruitment exercises
 - Directly contact non-members at least once per term
 - Identify an activist to be responsible for recruitment
5. The campaigns team are happy to make the termly contact with non-members, but in order to facilitate that process branches must obtain a full staff list from HR with email addresses. We made significant progress on this last year and there are only three institutions left where we need a full staff list to send to the campaigns team. These three institutions have just merged and we will be requesting a full staff list in November 2013.

6. We are also asking branches to consider ways of recruiting members that fall into the early careers category, i.e. under 35 and in the first few years of employment. Younger members also have much to offer the branch with different experiences and perspectives to draw from.

7. Planning for the future is essential to the sustainability of branches, and integral to this is the recruitment of members in the younger age ranges. The development of new activists and growth of membership numbers is crucial to ensuring that UCU has sufficient membership density to maintain its collective strength and remain a strong voice in the workplace.

Priority 2 – Mapping

8. We are asking branches that have not yet engaged in the mapping process do so as soon as possible. Support is available in completing the first draft of a map and those requiring assistance should contact the Wales Office.

9. We are asking branches with maps to take steps to keep the information confidential and up to date by obtaining/chasing a 'starters and leavers' list from your HR department. Appendix one gives you an overview of the information we hold on your branch, including when we last requested a starters and leavers list from HR. Please contact the office if the information is out of date.

10. We are also asking for maps to be expanded to include equality profiles and to use this information to encourage membership and activism within UCU in line with the overarching objectives set by the UCU Single Equality Scheme. Any branch requiring assistance with this should contact the Wales Office.

Priority 3 – Recruitment of Part time hourly paid (PTH) members and PTH Reps

11. We are asking branches in further education to consider ways of recruiting part time hourly paid members. We will be taking forward a campaign in the Assembly with the support of Bethan Jenkins, Plaid AM. We would like to have a part time hourly paid rep from each FE institution to engage with that campaign and feed back to the branch and membership.

12. We will be using the information gleaned from the Freedom of Information requests sent to institutions and how part time hourly paid staff are paid, to revisit the national agreement signed off in January 2005, to allow PTH staff to access permanent contracts in a fair and consistent manner across Wales. In doing this work we must publicise it and ensure that PTH staff know that UCU cares about their plight and encourage them to join UCU.

13. This group of staff are, as prospective members, sometimes difficult to reach by virtue of their work patterns. The map, if used properly, should allow you to highlight those staff members on part time hourly contracts and log the length of time spent on part time hourly contracts.

14. UCU's strength remains with the membership, the more members we have the stronger we are locally and nationally. Recruiting PTH members will not only increase the strength of each branch as a whole, but will also increase UCU's bargaining power in relation to this group of members and encourage management to engage with UCU on issues relating to them.

15. We would also ask branches to find a PTH Rep/member to become a member of the Branch Committee and engage with our work in the Assembly on the 'Casualisation' of the post 16 sector in Wales. This not only allows for feedback from PT members to ensure their perspective is considered when decisions are made by the branch committee, but also demonstrates UCU's interest in issues relating to members on hourly paid contracts.

16. Those branches that have made the most progress in recruiting, organising and negotiating on behalf of hourly paid staff are those with hourly paid committee members.

17. Finally, we also wish to increase the levels of activism amongst women within UCU Cymru structures and as a consequence of recruiting PTH members, more women members, will contribute towards this aim.

Priority 4 – Organising Rep for each Branch

18. We are encouraging each branch to recruit/designate an Organising Rep. Where the LA appoints to this role consideration should be given to the need for a lay rep. The role of an Organising Rep can be many and varied, but particular focus is on ensuring organising remains on the agenda for branches; co-ordinating organising activity within the branch and acting as a point of contact for organising related matters.

19. The Organising Rep is not expected to tackle organising alone, it is a matter for the branch as a whole, but they may be involved in developing an organising plan for the branch going forward and would be instrumental in co-ordinating the activities and campaigns in line with that plan. The Organising Rep will also be looking for opportunities to organise and may be involved in membership and activist recruitment drives, mapping and approaching new members of staff to talk about joining the union. Organising is central to the work of UCU and is essential in building, developing and sustaining a strong and effective union.

Priority 5 – Department Reps (Head office contacts campaign)

20. We are encouraging branches to recruit Department Reps. The use of the term 'dept' reps is generic and each branch and LA will need to decide what the appropriate terminology is to describe this role. The value of having a representative in each department should not be under-estimated. We understand that members who have not been active previously can be intimidated by the idea of getting involved in the branch structures, but the role of the Department Rep can be a low level introduction to union activities and activism.

21. The role of the Department Rep can be expanded with time, but as a starting point might be to act as a 'point of contact', referring members with queries/difficulties to relevant

branch committee members, putting up posters and other UCU information on department notice boards and distributing newsletters etc. The Dept Rep could also, if confident to do so, speak to new staff members about joining UCU, or at the very least, contact the Membership Secretary or other relevant Branch Rep with details of the new member of staff so that they can initiate contact.

22. In time the role could also include: checking and updating the map for the staff in their department, checking and updating membership details for the members in their department.

23. Introducing members to activism in this manner will help to build confidence and interest in UCU and could in time lead to increased levels of activism, which benefits the branch and helps build towards its sustainability.

24. Research tells us that the most successful branches are those where the union is 'visible' and Department Reps would go a long way to maintaining the visibility of UCU in the workplace and alleviate some of the pressure on existing Branch Reps by taking on some of the tasks mentioned above.

25. Recruiting Dept Reps can be approached in several ways, you can advertise via a newsletter or by emailing all members to seek volunteers. Alternatively, the map can be used in this process to enable the branch to identify members within each department that can be approached and asked to act as Dept Rep.

Priority 6 – Senior Branch Officer with responsibility for policy and communication

26. UCU Cymru needs to develop its 'lay' officer capacity to engage with the policy agenda and lobbying activity in relation to Welsh government and assembly members. The rules allow for three meetings a year of lay reps and the agendas tend to be overloaded with items. To ensure that UCU Cymru responses and activities are properly discussed and agreed in a timely fashion we believe we need to set up a group of senior branch officers with responsibility for policy and communications.

27. We are asking branches to nominate a senior branch officer, to be responsible for liaising with the UCU Wales Policy and Communication Officer (PCO), with regard to consultations from the Welsh Assembly and other relevant bodies. The nominated branch officer would also be the point of contact with regard to campaigns that may occur from time to time. As Wales is politically distinct from other parts of the United Kingdom, it is considered that links between the PCO and branches should be developed and maintained, in order to be best placed for contributing to and counterbalancing the information shared by institutions with Assembly Members.

28. This is a new role that will be developed with the support of the UCU Wales Office PCO. It is envisaged that UCU Wales will share information on consultations and campaigns with the nominated senior branch officers, who will disseminate that information to branch members. Nominated Officers will then feedback to the PCO, to better inform the content of submissions to consultations. Likewise, information regarding campaigns and lobbying of

AM's will be distributed and shared. Where appropriate, feedback will also help to inform the nature of information supplied to the press.

29. Input from branches is critical in ensuring that appropriate consultation responses are submitted and that campaigns can be run effectively. It is hoped that this will be a two way process, which will increase the voice of UCU Wales members in the Welsh Assembly.

Target branches

30. This year we are targeting the following branches for assistance with organising in light of mergers:

Cardiff and the Vale (CAVC)	Phil Markham
Glyndwr University	Margaret Phelan
University of South Wales	Bethan Healan

Equality

31. Strategic Equality Plans: Low engagement at stage one of the SEP process for the academic year 2012-13 led to extensive resources being reallocated into evaluating the compliance of Strategic Equality Plans and training around this objective.

32. This work has now been completed, and therefore the organising strategy for 2013-2014 will focus on using strategic equality plans in local bargaining. Two areas have previously been identified Promotion/Progression in Higher Education and Equal Pay Audits in Further Education. Materials and resources will be developed and distributed to assist Branches and LAs in undertaking this work.

33. Domestic Abuse Policies: The Welsh Government will be introducing a Violence Against Women Bill in the next Assembly. In support of this work, and the campaign to eradicate violence against women in all its forms, UCU Wales will commit to providing a policy for HE branches and LAs to table.

34. For the Further Education Sector, a Domestic Abuse policy will be tabled with Colegau Cymru for agreement as a national policy. Materials and resources will be developed and distributed to assist Branches and LAs in undertaking this work.

35. The Wales Office will also build on the work that has been completed on Professorial Pay for the academic year 2012-2013, with a view to doing some work with Branches/LAs that wish to campaign further on this area. Supporting documents will be shared at each HESC meeting.

Training

36. Training is fundamental to building and developing branches and undertaking training is essential in equipping reps with the knowledge and tools to fulfil their designated role within the branch. Training is not just a way of up skilling, or updating existing knowledge, it

also gives officers the opportunity to meet reps from other branches, share experiences, build confidence and rediscover some of the enthusiasm that may have been lost over time.

37. Training helps to equip newer reps to take on casework (with adequate support from the Branch and Regional Office) and the more reps there are within a branch, who have undertaken training appropriate to their role, the more effective that branch will be.

38. Getting training off the ground in Wales has not been easy over the last couple of years. During the 2012/13 academic year a Reps 2 course had to be cancelled owing to poor take up, however for the second year running a Reps 1 course ran successfully. As we now have two cohorts of reps that have undertaken Reps 1, it is our intention to offer Reps 2 again this year to enable those Reps to continue and complete this training pathway.

39. We are also intending to hold Pensions training, in light of the proposed changes to the state pensions in 2015. As with previous Pensions training, we will be offering one session in North Wales and another in South Wales.

40. The Women's Leadership training originally specified in the Strategy for 2012/13 has been developed and will take place in September 2013.

41. For the 2013/14 we are offering fewer courses initially. This is so that we have the capacity to react to training requests in relation to implementing the organising strategy in Wales. Whilst the priorities in the organising strategy have been selected in order to ensure the development of a strong and sustainable union in Wales, we understand that not everyone feels equipped to take on specific roles or to engage comfortably with all organising activities. That is why we would like you to tell us what, if any, training is needed in order to facilitate implementing the strategy in the branches / LA's.

Training	Dates	Location
Women's Leadership	26/09/2013	Cardiff TBA
Pensions	TBA (Feb 2014)	North Wales & South Wales
Reps 2	TBA (June 2014)	Cardiff TBA

Agreed by Council

R. J. Watkins
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Date 18 Oct 2013

Appendix One

HEC/FEC priorities for 2013/14

1. FEC – Maximise member involvement in consultation on national pay offer and industrial action if agreed. (N/A in Wales)
2. FEC – Support and organise branches to resist attacks on jobs, pay and contractual conditions of service including imposed changes to lesson observation. (N/A in Wales)
3. FEC – Support and maximise branch engagement in regional and national workload campaign.
4. FEC – Recruit and organise part-time teacher and trainer/instructor grades with a view to improve conditions of service.
5. FEC – Maximise employer adaption of NJF national agreement on Equality in employment.
6. FEC – Seek to improve organisation of prison and adult education employed in the region. (N/A in Wales)

7. HEC – Pursue bargaining objectives on pay, equality, pensions and jobs

Areas covered include our work on Equal Pay (HPLs and Professoriate), FTCs, Disability, and use of the public sector equality duties, redundancy avoidance agreements

8. HEC – Support branches to implement and uphold national and local agreements and to negotiate with new providers of HE.

Areas covered include our work around the New JNCHES review, the National Framework Agreement, Grade Drift, the post-92 national contract, developing further national guidance on employment issues, the IR implications of HE/FE consortia and private providers, and improving the capacity of the union to bargain with employers.

9. HEC – Workloads.

10. HEC – Responding to employer initiatives on performance and productivity management.

Areas include our work on performance management, and the NSS

11. HEC - Work to maintain quality, effectiveness and high professional standards in teaching and research.