

LUCU Members Update 16th November 2023

Dear LUCU members,

At this point, it is old news that the 4 Fights ballot was unsuccessful. We plan to organise a members' meeting to discuss the ballot results, so watch this space.

In response to a rising number of concerns on academic freedom or freedom of speech, as well as to cases of antisemitism and Islamophobia, Jenny Sherrad (UCU national head of equality and policy) has recently asked branches to remind members to disseminate the UCU statement on academic freedom, that UCU opposes all forms of discrimination, and that we can help you [finding support available when experiencing discrimination, bullying or harassment](#). If you are affected, please get in touch with us.

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LUCU: we are a glocal branch

At the recent members' quorate meeting (GM), we discussed tactics for keeping up the pressure on senior management to return MAB-deductions money. We are also exploring legal options to take the employer to court over MAB deductions. We are currently following the internal grievance process for return of MAB deductions, as we need to exhaust internal processes first. If the grievance is not upheld we will approach UCU national to support us to take the cases to court.

We also passed two motions. First, a motion of support and financial donation to the legal campaign to reinstate the "History of Africa and the African Diaspora" programme and Prof. Hakim Adi at the University Chichester was carried with 86% of votes in favour. An emergency motion on the bombardment and siege of Gaza was also discussed and carried with 82% of votes in favour, with 9% abstain and 9% against. We are also planning to organise another members' meeting, to discuss the outcome of the 4 Fights ballot - watch this space.

In terms of branch operations, LUCU has been dealing with several important issues. Not surprisingly, over the past couple of months we have received questions and worked with members on excessive workloads. The branch has provided members information and support, as many report facing challenges accessing information about their workload (e.g. tariff used to calculate it), as well as problems understanding the distribution of hours. These concerns have been raised by members in departments that use Simitive to calculate workload and in others that don't. In short, **moving from one system to another is not going to resolve the acute problem of excessive workload, stress and anxiety we face at Lancaster University**. We expressed concerns about Simitive back in March 2021, and the then Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development informed us LU would share "some draft principles for workload planning for 21/11 and further information on the Simitive project." LUCU has not yet received any further updates. Thus, we believe that the implementation of Simitive is being done without consultation with LUCU. We are following this up and we will keep you posted.

A new 'arrival' and source of concerns is the Curriculum Transformation Programme (CTP). As a side note, if you attend one of the meetings introducing the CTP, please pay attention to how the implementation of this packet of work will run. Staff and students are invited to participate and collaborate with one another, but where is the time to do so? How is this extra participation accounted for in our already overflowing workloads? And if you hear an argument about a shortfall of money in

response to your questioning of the expected good-will gesture/unpaid labour by staff members, be aware that **the financial shortfall they are arguing is only in relation to hoped for growth, not in relation to last year's result**. Branch officers, exec members, and reps, will continue to raise concerns in the existing fora, and you can strengthen our voices by raising yours too.

These are only some examples of the work done locally in the branch, to which we should add all case work. The branch also spends considerable time raising collective concerns through existing mechanisms in Lancaster University, e.g. CCM (Communication and Consultation Meetings) and POE (People and Organisational Effectiveness). Most of this work is done on a voluntary basis, and often remains invisible

There are many ways and forms in which you can also help - please do get active and contribute when and as you can - **it is your branch!**

What else is going on at LU

As you may have heard, there are several **restructure processes** going on at the moment. The restructure in ERDF is over, and of the initial people at risk, 15 people were made redundant, 5 resigned, 49 redeployed. No redundancies are expected in OWT (professional services), but in Student Wellbeing Services 4 are facing redundancy (2 have left, 2 still looking at redeployment). And in FASS (professional services) individual consultations have begun.

The process of **raising and processing grievances** is not adequate at the moment. The time lapse between raising a grievance and it being heard is months. POE are looking into ways to speed up the process, including hiring external people to help. Trade Unions on campus have expressed concerns about this, and there will be a fuller discussion on this shortly.

The **Maternity Leave and other Family Friendly policies** have been recently reviewed, and the changes made were welcomed by the unions. However, we have raised concerns about the differential in treatment of parents by different genders, as this version of the policies gets much worse. We have suggested that they increase the number of weeks for paternity/partner leave to be in parity with maternity/adoption leave. As usual, we will keep you posted.

Solidarity with FE colleagues

Let's remember that our colleagues at FE at 14 UCU branches are taking strike action over pay, workload and national binding bargaining. The successful FE ballot started in late August and saw 32 branches beating the 50% threshold. Offers of pay rises of at least 6.5%, and agreement on workloads have followed in some FE branches already. Solidarity with FE UCU branches still in dispute at: Bath College, Bolton College, Capital City College Group, Craven College, Farnborough College of Technology, Heart of Yorkshire Education Group, Hugh Baird College, Loughborough College, Myerscough College, Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group, Runshaw College, Warrington & Vale Royal College and Weymouth College.

Update on Save university pensions, and save the planet

Thanks to your support, [our pensions](#) are finally being restored! Make no mistake, this is because of you – and the legal case which we pursued, which, despite [losing](#) on appeal, established a new precedent for a 'beneficiary derivative claim' that can be used to hold the USS directors accountable in future. But we should have never needed to go to court - we need reform so that governance works in the first place.

So, we're asking you to join us to transform USS governance! [Add your name to this petition to help us get democratic governance, clean energy, and protect social rights](#) – it's just 1 minute, and we want to hear all your ideas.