

## LUCU Members Update 16th October 2023

Dear LUCU members,

Much has happened in the last few weeks in the branch, the university, and the union as a whole. The end of MAB and the start of the AY has kept us all very busy, but we cannot further delay having a conversation about the way in which we move forward here in Lancaster. Together, we must decide how to continue pushing senior-management into talk to us not only about returning MAB deductions, but about many other related and unrelated processes that impact our local working conditions, i.e. restructures, redundancies.

Thus, we invite you to attend a General Meeting next week.

- **General Meeting: 24th October 2023, 12 noon**
- **Have your say: yes to stage 1 grievance hearing**
- **The long game: challenging redundancies in RES (One Lancaster)**
- **Employment Tribunal claim regarding institutional and direct racism**
- **Welcome to INTO Lancaster - looking forward to union recognition**
- **It's time to vote (yes)!**

**General Meeting: 24th October 2023, 12 noon**

Lancaster UCU's General Meeting

### Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes from last GM (for approval)
3. Strategies for local impact
  - a. Failure to agree
  - b. Grievances
  - c. Impact of MAB
  - d. Social Media
4. LUCU socials (Joanne, Giovanni)
5. Motion of support and financial donation - legal campaign to reinstate the "History of Africa and the African Diaspora" programme/Prof. Hakim Adi.
6. AOB

### Have your say: yes to stage 1 grievance hearing

As you all have heard, [LU is in the top five of salary deductions due to MAB](#), and refuses to return any money. More recently, **LU is trying to demobilise our collective action by asking members to confirm they want their MAB grievances to be heard.** This is another strategy of union busting. We shall have none of that! **If you have received a request to confirm you want your grievance to be heard, answer yes.** You have the right to attend a Stage 1 grievance hearing, and our very knowledgeable Sunil Banga has volunteered to go along/help you throughout the process.

**Raising MAB related grievances is a pivotal way for LUCU to keep up the pressure.** For reference, management cancelled the September CCM; senior management - specifically our Vice-Chancellor - continues to refuse talking to LUCU beyond JNCC and CCM; and now they are trying to get away with not hearing grievances. **If you have raised a MAB grievance, please let us know.**

**If you haven't raised a grievance yet, what are you waiting for? There is strength in numbers.** Find attached our own LUCU's MAB-related grievance template kindly crafted by Sunil Banga.

### The long game: challenging redundancies in RES (One Lancaster)

A number of staff in RES (One Lancaster) have been made redundant, with statutory minimum redundancy pay, this year at LU. Most immediately as a result of EU funding running out, but also because of senior management's uncaring and shortsighted approach to that situation. LUCU repeatedly warned senior management and PoE about the highly irregular way the One Lancaster restructuring was being carried out. We have been considering raising a claim with the Employment Tribunal as we believe the collective consultation processes which LU follows were inadequate and did not meet statutory requirements. You may have noticed in last Friday's LU Text email update that LU has done well in the KEF. This email went out on the same day as the last working day of those made redundant. Deep irony indeed.

In recent, related, news, **the employer has indicated that they want to settle rather than go to Tribunal about how it goes about to collectively consult on potential redundancies. This suggests to us that the employer knows it is in the wrong legally.** Our challenge has in that sense been successful. Importantly, this should mean that future consultations with campus unions about potential redundancies will be better, and we'll have a better chance of fighting redundancies. It's worth noting that this is the second time (!) UCU is mounting a legal challenge to LU over this. They had better up their game now!

#### **Employment Tribunal claim regarding institutional and direct racism**

Members would be aware that LUCU has been supporting an individual case of racism at Lancaster University since July 2020. After an inordinately long process of grievance and appeal, where the University refused to acknowledge that there was any institutional or direct racism on campus, we approached the University Council in June 2022 to ask for an external and independent investigation, which has since then been persistently refused by senior management. After almost 3 years of raising concerns, in February this year, we were told by the University that they consider the matter closed, with no acknowledgement at all of the deep trauma and pain that whistleblowing staff have gone through in the last 3 years in their quest for justice.

Since then we have been in communications with The Office for Students, The Charity Commission, The Equality and Human Rights Commission, The House of Commons Select Committee on Education, and The House of Lords Public Services Committee, about the institutional failure to deal with racism. We have also followed the legal process and raised a claim with the Employment Tribunal on this matter. **The ET judge has accepted the case**, which is now listed for preliminary hearing on 15 November, with further 3 days set in March next year for a full hearing.

LUCU remains extremely concerned by the very clear and disturbing pattern in which profound institutional failure to respond to cases has become normalised. It is unfortunate that senior management seems to be unwilling to accept the reality that racism exists and is being perpetuated on campus as a direct result of management's decisions and their inability to investigate and deal with cases properly under the university's own policies.

#### **Welcome to INTO Lancaster - looking forward to union recognition**

We're pleased to report that all staff at our former International Study Centre on campus, aside from a few who took voluntary redundancy, were transferred to Lancaster's new provider of foundation programmes, INTO Lancaster, on 1 September 2023 under the TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings - Protection of Employment) rules. The UCU looks forward to a constructive relationship with INTO Lancaster and, working closely with UCU members there, hopes to agree a union recognition agreement for INTO staff.

**It's time to vote (yes)!**

We are in the middle of a rebalot. **Remember to vote.** At national level, our sustained action has delivered success in the pensions dispute, but we need to keep fighting against precarity, racial, gender, and body-ability inequalities. The future of the sector rests in our hands. Do it for what you believe Higher Education should be like. Do it for your overworked peer who has to keep moving across the country/countries every time the post-doc contract comes to an end. Do it for your Black colleagues who are paid 17% less than white staff (national average). Do it because your pay has fallen 25% in real terms since 2009. Do it for disabled staff who are over-represented in lower paid posts. Do it because you are working 51.3 hours a week (national average), you are missing out on life, and you have wondered whether you are depressed/suffer from stress/anxiety. Do it for your ECR colleagues on temporary contracts who remain underpaid and underpromoted for years and years.

If you need a replacement ballot, [the request form can be accessed here](#). The replacement ballot request option will only be available between Friday 29 September 2023 (09:00) and Sunday 29 October 2023 (23:59). Note that this form is the same as the 'I've voted' form for members-- members simply pick a different option on the first page to request a replacement ballot, then they have to fill out their address details.

And please, tell us you have voted. [The UCU Rising 'I've voted' form can be accessed here](#). This tool allows members to self-report that they have voted, so there will be no need for UCU to remind them again (for instance via ThruText or phone-banking). Some members do not wish to say whether they have voted but do not wish to be reminded/contacted; they can pick that option on the form. Once members submit this, we will endeavour to update our databases and mailing lists within 24 hours during the working week (Monday-Friday).