

Lancaster UCU e-Bulletin (January 2016)

In this edition:

- **Campus News: Negotiating Policies**
- **Regional Solidarity: Regional Networking**
- **National News: Trade Union Bill Week of Action, HE Green Paper**
- **International Solidarity: Bahrain**

Happy New Year and Welcome Back!

We hope you have had a restful holiday. Much lies ahead of us in 2016, not least discussions around the government's HE Green Paper, continuing opposition to the government's draconian Trade Union Bill, as well as ongoing negotiations on pay and pensions. Looking back on 2015, the branch has had a busy, constructive year with the following highlights, which we hope to build on as we face the challenges ahead.

Review of 2015

In the Branch

- We have supported dozens of staff through our committed and experienced team of casework volunteers, backed up by regional officers
- During the pension dispute, Lancaster University, amongst only a small number of UK universities, threatened to make individual striking staff members legally liable for damages. We challenged this threat repeatedly, forcing the VC finally to retract the statement
- We have expanded, consolidated and made our leadership team more representative of the membership
- We have finally got some paid time (0.6 'facility time') for office-holders to do their job
- After half a year, we are coming close to completing a Partnership Agreement with management that enshrines the right of UCU, Unite and Unison to continue to undertake collective bargaining on campus to defend the working conditions of staff
- As part of the Partnership Agreement, we will be moving into our new shared trade union offices in the old Conference Centre. This will include a meeting room and we hope that this centrally located facility will be an easily accessible and welcoming hub for members
- During national recruitment week, we raised union visibility on campus and now have union reps in more departments, as a first point of contact for members
- 2015 saw five e-Bulletins to members to keep them updated as well as a new, collectively written, leaflet explaining why it is important to be in the union and what Lancaster UCU does on campus and in the sector more widely

Regionally and Nationally

- We joined tens of thousands of others in Manchester in the autumn to protest against the Trade Union Bill and public sector cuts
- We had three national speakers: Sally Hunt, general secretary, Liz Lawrence, president, and Jo McNeill, elected rep for the North-West
- We attended the annual National Congress, where policy, in the form of motions, is debated and voted on by delegates
- Julie Hearn, LUCU joint VP, will be standing as a candidate in next month's elections to the National Executive Committee (NEC). Critical decisions are made here. When you receive your ballot paper, please read the candidates' statements and please use your vote!

This is what we achieved in 2015 with the current active members. If we want to have more of an impact on campus this year, we need more active members, cue our call for nominations for posts at our AGM next week!

Looking Forward: Annual General Meeting (AGM) 1pm Wednesday 20 January 2016 Furness Lecture Theatre 2

Our AGM is important. This is the time of year where we vote for our new committee and hear the President's and Treasurer's reports. As a democratic, member-led organisation, we need your input and participation and look forward to seeing you there. Please do come and bring a fellow member!

CAMPUS NEWS: Negotiating Policies

This year, in addition to monthly meetings with management, Lancaster UCU will be negotiating a raft of policies with human resources, beginning with fixed term contracts, the appeals process and sabbaticals. We are already involved in discussions on changes to the Professional Development Reviews (PDRs) and will keep you updated.

REGIONAL SOLIDARITY: Regional Networking

UCU Regional Committee Meeting 16 January 2016, Manchester

NATIONAL NEWS: Trade Union Bill Week of Action, HE Green Paper

Trade Union Bill Week of Action 8-14 February 2016

This government is determined to shift the balance of power in the workplace in favour of employers, and get the Trade Union Bill through parliament with as little public scrutiny as possible. It is essential that we keep up the pressure as the Bill enters its critical House of Lords stage. Yesterday, it had its seconding reading in the Lords.

Here is an excellent article by John Hendy QC and Professor Keith Ewing.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/do-the-house-of-lords-have-the-stomach-for-a-fight-over-the-trade-union-bill-a6805951.html>

UCU will be joining the entire trade union movement for a national week of action across hundreds of workplaces <https://www.tuc.org.uk/tubill> #heartunions We are in the process of seeing what we can organise on campus and/or in town and will email the details when we have them.

The transport union, the RMT, have organised a meeting on the Trade Union Bill with national speakers from the RMT and the NUT on **Wednesday 29 January 2016 7pm Friends Meeting House, Lancaster.**

HE Green Paper

In November 2015 the government published its consultative Green Paper aimed at 'changing the higher education landscape'. Its key proposals include creating a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) with its rise of metrics and uncapping of fees; opening up the sector to new, private organisations; attacking the architecture of academic statutes; and further concentrating research funding. The 100 page plus detail can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice>

Professor Roger Brown, Times Higher Education Lifetime Achievement award-holder, comments:

'In *Everything for Sale?* with Helen Carasso (Routledge, 2013) the writer argued that the main changes in higher education policy over the past thirty or so years could be explained in terms of the progressive marketization of the system by governments of all political persuasions ... The Green Paper *Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* (BIS, 2015) published on 6th November represents the latest stage in this process'. <http://cdbu.org.uk/reflections-on-the-green-paper-tef/>

University College London (UCL) UCU are hosting a national conference, 'The HE Green Paper: The threat to the public university ... and what we can do about it', on **Saturday 27 February 2016**, with speakers from UCU, Campaign for the Public University and Council for the Defence of British Universities. The purpose is to develop a collective critique of the Paper and to build an opposition to it. As philosopher, Martha Nussbaum, Professor of Law and Ethics, wrote in *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (2012: 2):

'The crisis [in education] is facing us, but we have not yet faced it. We go on as if everything were business as usual, when in reality great changes of emphasis are evident all over. We haven't really deliberated about these changes, we have not really chosen them, and yet they increasingly limit our future.'

The conference should be a friendly and informative event. Please contact us if you have any questions. Information and registration details are here <https://heconvention2.wordpress.com/paper-and-convention/> Printable poster here <https://heconvention2.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/convention-poster-a4.pdf>

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY: Bahrain

UK Trade Union Solidarity Against Human Rights Abuses in Bahrain

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=7618>

Invite a colleague to join UCU online today at: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/join>