

NEWSLETTER



AN INFORMATION BULLETIN FROM UCU AT ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

September 2019

Introduction

Welcome to the latest issue of the University and College Union (UCU) Branch Newsletter. At ARU we are the only independent voice and collective representative body for academic and academic-related staff.

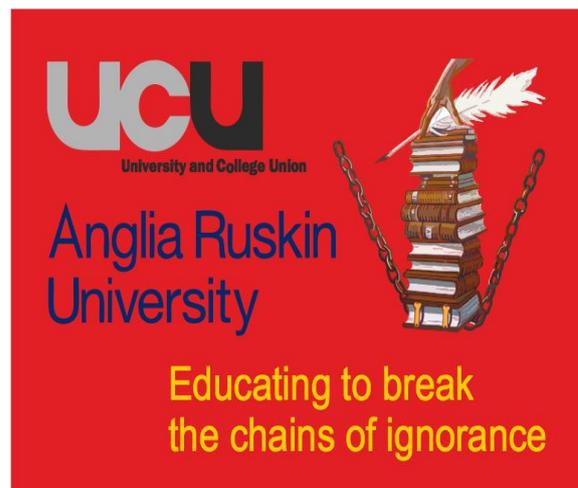
As the academic year begins, staff continue to face uncertainty over job security. In this issue, we reproduce in full the **Provisional Response of UCU to the 2019/2020 Budget Savings Programme**. As we have made clear on numerous occasions, we want ARU to be a successful and sustainable institution, a community in which people are happy to work and study, where mutual respect and honesty lie in the service of excellence. We are not convinced that the course being embarked upon meets these straightforward demands.

As discussed below, the final deadline for the submission of responses to the savings plans has been pushed back to October 9th. We urge all staff to make their views heard and to share concerns with your UCU representatives (see below for details). If you have been in contact and not heard back from us, please accept our apologies, but as can be appreciated we have been inundated with member inquiries. Write again or feel free to call me on 07904 515580.

Nationally, our union is calling for a resounding and positive vote in the ballot for action which closes at 12 noon on Wednesday, October 30th. We are working with all the major unions in Higher Education to demand the employers raise our salaries on all spine points on the national pay scale by RPI plus 3% or £3,349 (whichever is the greater); to take nationally agreed action to close the gender pay gap and the ethnic pay gap; agree a framework to eliminate precarious employment practices by Universities; and, tackle the rising workloads driving staff to breaking point.

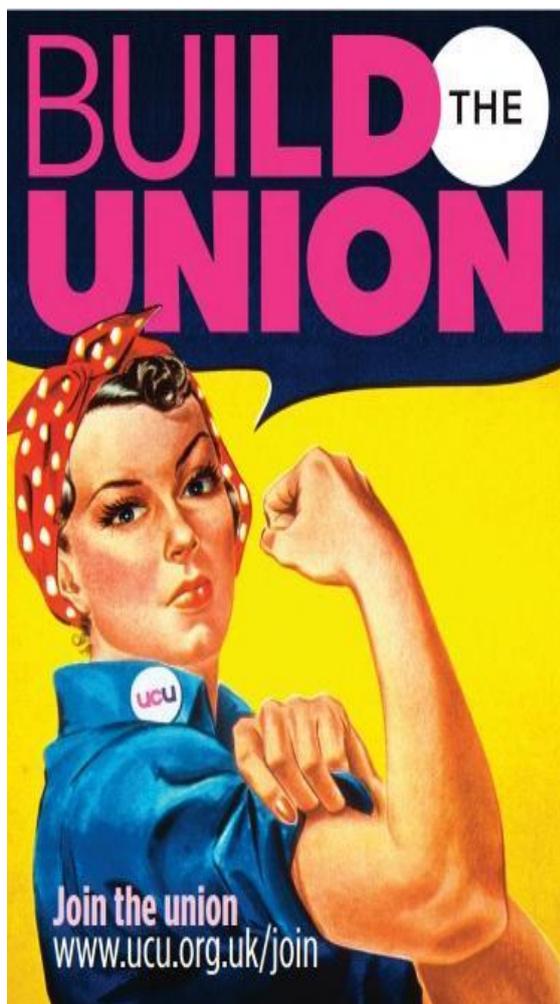
By voting in large numbers for action, we can demonstrate determination and force our employers to move towards meeting our

reasonable demands. Locally, a high turnout and positive vote for action will send the signal to our management that we are no longer prepared to endure injustice, inequality and the deterioration of our working conditions. We urge you to vote yes to taking industrial action and action short of a strike, including a marking and assessment boycott. It is essential that all our members cast their vote.



If you wish to participate in UCU activities and get more involved, please contact your representatives and come along to the meetings advertised. If you are not already a member, now is a good time to join. UCU is the most widespread and independent network in the University, with a membership approaching 400 and which has grown by 20% in the last two years (See: <https://join.ucu.org.uk>)

John Hogan, Chair of ARU UCU



Provisional Response to Anglia Ruskin University: 2019/2020 Budget Savings Programme

As we have made clear previously, there is much to celebrate with the leadership of our University. The confirmation of Roderick Watkins as Vice Chancellor earlier this year was widely welcomed. The willingness to address our concerns about the direction of travel hitherto taken by HR has resulted in pleasing results, with the hope that we can embark upon a more civilised approach to employment relations. We are also encouraged by the ongoing drive to raise the prestige of our community through the development of the Medical School. And, most recently, we are grateful for the VCs support in mobilising the University in solidarity with the Climate Strike and his declaration of an emergency. Likewise, we are pleased to share the platform with

James Rolfe and to broadcast the VCs high profile to make a difference.

Nevertheless, UCU has profound misgivings regarding the current consultation exercise concerning the 2019/2020 Budget savings Programme, which was first aired on June 20th and which remains ongoing.

We note the rationale presented for the proposed cuts and the declaration that our University's financial position remains sound and stable. However, we remain unconvinced that the University needs to make the £9.5 million savings which are being proposed. UCU has requested and received assurances that we would receive detailed accounts for every part of the university. These detailed accounts have yet to be provided.

We note, while staff face the prospect of job losses, the University has advertised the plan to spend £200 million on a building programme. As marketing ploys go, this is grossly insensitive to staff facing job insecurity. The decision to cut salary bills to feed a building frenzy appears questionable, to say the least. Higher Education has all the appearances of a "bubble economy", one that is vulnerable to severe and abrupt "correction", where investment in ever increasing capacity might easily translate into a liability rather than an asset.

With a comprehensive understanding of the current financial position of the University hidden from view, it is impossible for staff to contribute fully to the consultation process. As we are prevented from inspecting the flow of income and expenditure across the institution, any discussion of alternative ways of effecting the efficient allocation of our resources is prevented. Transparency might yield insight and better alternatives. When it comes to inspecting how resources are used, UCU would like details of how much is being paid and the decision-making process governing the issue of contracts to external providers, such as consultants and training organizations. The ongoing costs of PDT training and the financial arrangements with student recruitment agencies are obvious areas of concern, along with the contracts established with marketing firms. To illustrate, UCU has been attempting to find out how much the University has been spending on the recent rebranding exercise. In May we were told the figure stood at approximately £100,000, only to be told in July

that the figure was more like £180,000. Yet, other sources indicate the figure could well be in the region of £430,000.

With regard to the ongoing consultation, UCU is more than a little concerned about how the process has been managed. In short, it has been a fiasco. The papers outlining proposals have been of uneven quality and depth. They have been released to us in dribs and drabs. Why no one had the good grace to collate and present a unified document denotes a somewhat amateurish, if not contemptuous approach to a very serious transformation process, which is likely to have significant impact on many people's lives. The fact that the statutory Section 188 notification provided to us over the summer was completed incorrect, despite prior warning and very clear guidance, speaks volumes. It is not very inspiring that following our interventions the University was compelled to reissue the notice, with the effect that the new final deadline for staff responses is now set at October 9th.

As we pointed out at the outset, we are disappointed the consultation process appears to be somewhat disjointed. Consultation for savings in Professional Services began from June 19th and closed at the end of July. However, the faculties were still in the process of pulling together savings proposals as that set of conversations was coming to a close. We are curious as to why the University should choose this course. With any significant and wide-ranging savings plan, it is essential to consider how each part of the whole will function in relation to the other parts, over time.

The argument for a unified consultation timetable also speaks to the need for equality of opportunity. We were told that redeployment opportunities will be considered and notably the possibility of movement across different job categories. However, this offering was subverted by the twin-track timetable. The coordination and synchronisation of our different budget holders is a basic pre-requisite for organisational efficiency. We have indicated that the best way to effect long term efficiencies is to engage in consultations conducted over a reasonable period of time, which allow for a wide range of observations and collective wisdom to come to the fore. More specifically, the production of savings plans in different faculties have brought into view inconsistency of approaches, as well as

raising significant concerns about the potential discrimination against staff with protected characteristics. This piecemeal approach has meant that the proposals to make savings, which has constantly been presented as a problem for the University as a whole, appear in a disjointed and uncoordinated manner. As a consequence, UCU is prevented from offering a coherent set of counter-proposals and can only address the issue in a similar piecemeal manner. This lack of cohesion means that the proposals are doomed to failure from the outset.

Perhaps some of the more glaring anomalies might have been avoided if there had been more meaningful commitment to proper consultation. However, the timing of the exercise and lack of basic understanding of what is involved in such a process has meant that in parts of the University, managers have failed to exercise their mandate. It is evident that risk assessments have not been conducted. There are risks to staff who have to carry out the remaining workload and to students who might well suffer with a depletion of the service they receive. So, for instance, the targeting of those in doctoral supervisory roles has not been accompanied with serious consideration of the impact upon students or the capacity of those staff who survive to meet remaining obligations.

Likewise, vague promises to conduct process and systems reviews, only *after* administrative staff have been culled, indicates an incompetence to lead. The starting point must be to assess and agree what work needs to be performed and then and only then to consider the staffing implications. This has not happened. The obvious result is that the removal of posts will result in the reallocation of tasks to staff who stay. So, for instance, UCU has been informed that there are plans afoot to shift more administrative tasks to academics. Leaving aside the fact that this is unacceptable, it is the case it represents an inefficient allocation of resources. Academic staff are more expensive and yet untrained to perform such work. This idiotic suggestion is a recipe for conflict. It is a false economy and in the long term is likely to involve increased costs to the University rather than reduce them. It is perhaps no surprise to hear, at other institutions, where this kind of experiment in diverting academics into tasks for which they are unsuited, allegedly led to a spike in

grievances and the abandonment this mindless innovation once the progenitor moved on.

It is essential the University conducts a comprehensive review of workloads and this should be done prior to any decisions about staffing allocation. As things stand, UCU anticipate rising levels of work-related stress, grievances and conflict, along with an assault upon much cherished student satisfaction. When our community faces the horror of rising student suicides, we need to pull together to make our University a safe and positive experience for all.

There is one sense in which the consultation process has been productive, for what is demonstrated is the warning we provided regarding the folly of the decision made with the restructuring last year. The creation of a new layer of senior managers and the creation of associated additional costs has not gone unnoticed. Nor has the fact that the economies being sought appear to leave the command posts of the University untouched. While the cuts being sought are presented as rational, the exercise has all the hallmarks of being an exercise shaped by patronage at the expense of reason. UCU is concerned some, but admittedly not all, managers charged with extracting cost cutting are not fit to lead. Proposals being presented are contaminated by narrow self-interest, such that claims “we are all in this together” ring hollow. We are receiving widespread reports that many managers are not engaging in meaningful consultation with staff and are, instead, presenting the proposals as a fait accompli and planning for the future accordingly.

As the consultation period has yet to close, UCU reserve the right, one which will be vigorously enforced, to feed in detailed comments and critical analysis. To move forward, we urge the University to provide meaningful space for consultation and to follow the law when it comes to defining the pool of staff at risk and in the treatment of Associate Lecturers in particular, who are conspicuously absent in the Section 188 notice presented by HR. Compulsory redundancies can be avoided through the extension and enhancement of voluntary severance offerings. However, we are duty bound to reiterate our national policy of opposition to all compulsory redundancies and to warn that attempts to use the increase in employer contributions to the TPS as a pretext

for job losses will place the University in danger of being targeted in a wider national campaign of resistance.

Climate Strike



Matt Hayes, President of the SU speaking during the climate strike event on Cambridge campus

While we disagree with the direction of travel in relation to the Budget Savings Programme, it is a source of pride that our Vice Chancellor has responded positively to our call for the declaration of Climate Emergency. On Friday, September 20th actions and events were organised in solidarity with the school student strikes. In Chelmsford UCU members joined the Climate march. In Cambridge, it was a privilege to host strikers and to hear them speak on campus, where they joined a range of speakers from the Chaplaincy, Provide, the Students Union, the Global Sustainability Institute, the Vice Chancellor’s Group and UCU. Later in the afternoon, UCU hosted a meeting at

Cambridge University and heard about the challenges ahead from experts and leading academics in the field, including Professor Aled Jones from the GSI.

Clearly, there is a great deal that needs to be done to translate our collective duty into action. In this, as in other matters, we need to inspect the governance structures of our University, not least the priorities of the Chair of the Board of Governors, whose penchant for climate change denial has not gone unnoticed.

It was recently revealed that the Chair of Governors at ARU (Jerome Booth) has become a Trustee of the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF), a prominent lobby group opposing action on climate change and promoting misinformation about climate science.

Many students, staff members and alumni are deeply concerned about this threat to ARU's reputation as a pioneer in sustainability science, education and impact, and are calling on the Chair to cease involvement with the GWPF.

PLEASE SIGN THE OPEN LETTER HERE:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1BGQQBzhWe22MR6uW7t-7NhHXPuNNQRZCNLTnSufRugU/edit?usp=sharing>

Please share with other ARU staff/students/alumni.

There is also a Facebook page here for discussion and updates:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/Anglia-Ruskin-climate-change-letter-112787213409326/posts/?ref=page_internal

Message from UCU General Secretary

I wanted to write specifically to members in post-92 universities to set out why I think it is very important that you vote in UCU's current ballot on pay and equality.

Staff in the post-92 sector are a critical part of our higher education system - on the front line, delivering high quality education underpinned by a clear mission to widen access. I know how proud you are of this but I also know that the pressures of increased workload, job insecurity

and pay inequality are undermining what you do.

The sad fact is that while university leaders have been quick to claim credit for what you do, they have failed to address the issues within the sector which make your vital work more challenging than it needs to be:

- the average working week is above 50 hours, with 29% of academics averaging more than 55 hours
- job insecurity is endemic, with more than 100,000 teaching staff across higher education on casual contracts reporting that they are only paid for 55% of the work they do
- salaries are now worth around 20% less than they were in 2009 and gender and ethnicity driven inequalities abound.

UCU's ballot is about addressing these issues at a national level so we are able to improve the situation for all of us. This will not be easy. The employers have a vested interest in maintaining the current employment model that exists across the post-92 sector and relies on casualisation, overwork, and pay inequality.

I know that many of you will have started a new term worried about how you are going to get through the sheer volume of work that it involves, knowing that the Christmas vacation won't provide much respite – and wondering how you are going to maintain the high quality of education our students deserve. Now is the time to send your employers a message that something needs to change.

Your union is determined to negotiate a better deal for staff in these three key areas, but we can only do it if we come together. Put simply, the employers will not come back to the negotiating table to discuss your concerns and agree a way forward without a substantial vote in support of UCU's position in this ballot.

If you have not yet voted, please return your ballot paper today and please vote **yes** to both questions.

If you have not received or have lost your ballot papers, please make sure that your membership information is up to date using [My UCU](#), and [request a replacement ballot paper here](#).

Thank you for your support.

Jo Grady
UCU general secretary

ARU UCU Branch Representatives

Chair: John Hogan

Branch Secretary: Jane Aspell

Membership Secretary: Sarah Brown

Casework Coordinator: Andrew Noble

Treasurer: Julian Constable

Equality Officer: Noah Kofi Karley

Pensions Officer: David Skinner

Health & Safety Representatives: Don Keiller, Adrian Winckles

Learning Representative: John Gardner

Green Representatives: Felicity Clarke and Victoria Tait

Chelmsford Rep Adam Kenningham-Brown

Anti-Casualisation Officers: Meena Singh, Diane Keeble-Ramsay

Faculty Representatives

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences: Kerstin Hacker, Sarah Brown,

Faculty of Science and Engineering: Don Keiller

Faculty of Business and Law: Noah Kofi Karley, Andrew Noble, Swetketu Patnaik, Louise McKeon

Faculty of Health, Education, Medicine and Social Care: Adam Kenningham-Brown, Sarah Redsell, Natalie Hartley, Paul Evans and Jade Moore

Services Representatives

Alan White and Charlotte Nevison