



Dear Colleagues,

At our Branch meeting on Monday, January 11th it was pointed out a number of our officers have been subjected to formal grievance procedures (running over the last two months), that the claims of wrong-doing are false, utterly vexatious and were presented without a shred of evidence.

Dr John Hogan, Chair of the Branch, explained this blatant attempt to victimise UCU representatives would not be tolerated and that if the threat of disciplinary action was not dropped, then the Branch Executive would declare an official dispute with the University.

UCU met University leaders on Thursday, January 14th. Good sense has prevailed. No action will be taken against any of our officers and proposed disciplinary investigations have been quashed. In addition, it was agreed HR will work with us and our Regional Official, Lydia Richards, to safeguard local UCU representatives from victimisation. New procedures will be put in place, as well as revised guidance to and training for investigators in grievance and disciplinary cases.

UCU is heartened by the commitment of our University leaders and the Vice Chancellor in particular to the upcoming Wellbeing Reviews, which we have been calling for over a number of years and hope will provide staff with a safe space and opportunity to highlight areas of concern, with the aim of building a more respectful and better workplace.

Having entered into constructive dialogue, UCU is confident the commitment demonstrated by our University leadership will allow for more productive industrial relations.

The Branch Executive of ARU UCU has therefore decided that it is not necessary, at this stage, to declare an official dispute.

However, the Branch Executive has decided unanimously that contrition is required. The victims of false allegations have been forced to face threats to their employment over a two-month period and across what was supposed to be a period of rest and festive celebration. How such a calamity was allowed to unfold requires explanation. We are disturbed by the decision of the University to permit the processing of complaints presented without evidence and the failure of the investigator to spare the accused further anguish when early in the proceedings it was found the complainant could not substantiate any part of their claims. In accordance with University grievance procedure, disciplinary action should be taken against those who present complaints made with "malicious, vexatious or spurious intent". The Branch Executive has written to the Vice Chancellor, to insist the University take swift and decisive action and to issue a formal apology to UCU and Branch officers.

The needless distraction and stress imposed upon Branch officers by these recent events has inevitably had a negative impact upon our capacity to serve our members. We thank you for your understanding and many messages of support.

ARU UCU Branch Executive

January 19th, 2021