**JNC(UCU)05/12/19M**

**UCU Joint Negotiating Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held at 15:00 PM on 5 December 2019**

**in the Sussex House Committee room (v 1.0)**

**Present:**

**University Management:** Stephen Shute (SS), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Chair( ; Philip Harris (PH), Head of School, Mathematics and Physical Sciences; Sheila Gupta (SG), Director of HR; Bridget Edminson (BE), General Counsel; John Hallam, (JH) Interim Assistant Director of HR (Employee Relations); Katie Oram (KO), HR Administrator to the JNC.

**UCU representatives:** Andrew Chitty (AC); Charlotte Skeet (CS); Jo Pawlik (JP); Nadia Ali (NA)

1. **Welcome & apologies for absence**  
   The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **To approve the ‘part’ minutes of the UCU JNC meeting held on the 6th Nov 2019**

The part minutes of 6 November had been circulated. UCU put forward a request for a separate UCU minute taker. Stephen Shute said that UCU were able to put forward amendments to the minutes and that it was desirable there was only one set of minutes. The ‘part’ minutes of the previous JNC meeting held on 06/11/2019 were agreed as a correct record with the following ‘matter arising’ as below:

3.1 UCU Facilities

UCU now had a new office and a phone. UCU made additional requests for a meeting room and disability access.

3.3 Concerns around Bullying and Harassment

This issue was to be regarded as closed.

1. **Dignity and Respect Policy**

*Minute 3.5*: UCU noted that the Dignity and Respect Policy had been agreed and implemented. UCU, however, wished to put on record that excessive demands made at a senior level can create an environment which may result in ‘incentivised and structural’ senior management bullying around targets. UCU expressed regret that proposals they had made around the wording of this had not materialised in the final Dignity and Respect policy. There was some discussion around this point, the key management response being that stretching targets did not inevitably indicate ‘structural bullying.’ The issue of most importance is the culture and that everyone conducts themselves with courtesy, consideration and respect. ‘How’ things are delivered is as important as ‘what’ is delivered. A joined up approach was now in place ensuring that appraisal processes and training supported the objectives and values implicit in the Dignity and Respect Policy.

1. **Industrial Action (ASOS, spreading of deductions etc)**

SS said that management were unhappy that the ‘blockade’ at Sussex House by a group of autonomous students had resulted in the temporary evacuation and relocation of 200-300 people to alternative facilities across the campus. He noted that a number of staff had special, personal adaptations to their workstations. They were unable to benefit from these in their temporary locations. There was also regret at the personalised nature of the language, banners and chalking of pavements, some of which were very offensive (e.g. Ku Klux Klan) and not in keeping with Sussex values. SS said management would like UCU to issue a statement disassociating themselves from the autonomous student group and renouncing the current blockade and indeed any other future blockades, while recognising they did not have any control over the actions of this autonomous student group. UCU said they would not be prepared to issue any statement in the terms requested by management. AC conceded it had not been appropriate to describe the Vice Chancellor as a ‘white supremacist.’

UCU stated its wishes as being:

1. Deductions for strike action at 1/365;
2. Pro rata for part-time staff;
3. Clarification of the currently ambiguous statement on the web site of the position around pension deductions;
4. The staggering of pay deductions for strike action across several months;
5. Withdrawal of the Head of School e-mail around assessments and the alleged threat to deduct up to 100% of pay for ASOS;
6. UCU would like a clear statement to the effect that no deductions for ASOS will be applied at present.

AC, on behalf of UCU, confirmed that union member colleagues are committed to mitigating the impact on students of industrial action as much as possible.

SS noted that management reserved the right to re-prioritise work following a return to normal working. SS said that the Vice Chancellor was willing to speak directly to UCU colleagues about ASOS and spreading of payroll deductions in the following week. AC welcomed this on behalf of UCU and said it was important there was clarity.

1. **Financial update**

Due to time restrictions it was agreed a separate meeting would be arranged to discuss this.

1. **People strategy**

SG said that the People Strategy was driven by the themes of the University strategy. The People Strategy envisaged 5 over-arching aims – and the University welcomed feedback on these aims. UCU raised a number of questions. How did this support delivery of race equality and the race equality charter? How did it address structural inequality such as the race and gender pay gaps? SG said the University was committed to achieving the Race Equality Charter, Stonewall, Disability Confident and Athena SWAN standards. SG committed to diarising further meetings around the Gender Pay Gap.

JP asked for further explanation around the approach to ‘poor behaviour / poor performance.’ SS said abuse from any quarter was unacceptable – irrespective of status or income. JP also expressed concerns raised previously by UCU about alleged ‘off-rolling’ of contracts around research / teaching contracts. SS noted that moving to a teaching only contract will only ever be voluntary. AC noted that Research England rejected contract changes as means of addressing research performance.

Smaller points of note were:

* Page 5 – avoid ‘corporate’ language
* Prefer for ‘flexible’ not ‘agile’ working
* Not clear what is meant by ‘true followership’ or ‘business led technology solutions.’

1. **Climate Emergency**

UCU welcomed the declaration of a climate emergency by the University. AC asked that this should become a standing item on the agenda. SS said he had no objection to this in principle.

**Any other business**

1. **Teaching Timetable**

UCU noted that the issue of the teaching timetable for 2020 / 2021 was still not resolved. UCUs position was it wanted a commitment to an evening teaching (after 18.00) to be:

* Voluntary
* Exceptional
* No teaching at 9.00 a.m. if teaching after 18.00 the evening before.
* Do not wish late teaching to be normalised

SS noted Heads of School were currently able to agree exemptions to timetabling requests to work after 18.00.

It was agreed Kelly Coate, PVC Students and Education should be invited to the next JNC to discuss this further.

1. **Promotion Processes**

CS noted the feedback she had received on promotion processes and that she would follow up and discuss this further with SG.

1. **Date of next meeting: 4 February 2020 @ 14.00**