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UCU “mitigate the horror of it all”

UCU representatives and volunteer case workers have been working hard over the past two years, supporting our members during Transition by working with them and their managers to make sure that their skills and experience were recognised and used in their new roles.

Inevitably there were some disputes in the process of reorganisation and UCU volunteer case workers assisted members during meetings to resolve these. We also negotiated on behalf of members seeking voluntary severance, and provided moral support as well as legal and financial advice for these life changing decisions. We also liaised with our sister Unions (UNISON and UNITE) about our concerns on the impact of restructuring on the whole academic team.

UCU representatives also took members’ concerns ‘to the top’ - negotiating with the Director of Human Resources, Deputy VCs, managers and Deans about the new structures, working hard to mitigate the inevitable increase in academic workloads and reduce the stress and uncertainty surrounding reorganisation.



Let’s Meet for Lunch

On 1 October, changes to the USS pension scheme were introduced that substantially reduced the value of our pensions – and not coincidentally, the cost of those pensions to the University. UCU members have voted in favour of a campaign of industrial action to persuade our employers back to the negotiating table. This will start with ‘action short of a strike’ that involves working to contract. As part of this, we would like all members of the University to reclaim their lunch hour – no more hurried sandwiches between lectures or while you carry on working at your computer. Look out for our leaflet that you can leave at your desk or pin to your door, while you enjoy lunch with your colleagues.

UNION CITIES



We are pleased to announce that Southampton has been chosen as the first UCU **Union City**. This is a new initiative that aims to improve the strength of our Union by building stronger links and encouraging joint activities between the local branches at the University of Southampton, Southampton Solent University, Southampton City College and Eastleigh College. The project will be supported by regional and national UCU staff.

We aim to start by asking you, our members, to help us identify your concerns and priorities. Please spend a couple of minutes and make sure that your views count: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/unioncities>

The shape and direction of the Union City project will be decided by a steering group drawn from the four UCU branches, and will be closely informed by responses to the survey and the input of branch members.

The project group have had an initial meeting and the kinds of ideas discussed so far include:

- Campaigning on education policy change across post-16 education (e.g. issues that affect us locally, such as the withdrawal of Education Maintenance Allowance and impact on widening participation).
- Career and personal development skills for union members.
- Considering co-workers and the low paid (the Living Wage campaign and the social justice agenda).
- Building stronger connections with other related Trade Unions, such as Unite and Unison.

New Broom at HR



The UCU, Unison and Unite recently received an invitation from Janice Donaldson, the new director of HR, to contribute to the development of a redesigned reward strategy for all University staff.

Current thinking on the new strategy proposes a more supportive and developmental framework that should be of real use in PPDR meetings. UCU reps stressed the importance of assessing teams as well as individuals. Our suggestions for non-monetary rewards, such as mini-sabbaticals or focused admin support, were well received, and we also strongly defended the integrity of the existing pay spines.

We look forward to this collaborative way of working becoming a regular feature, enabling us to make an early input to significant issues that will affect all staff. More on this is the next newsletter, we hope.

Say NO to stress and bullying

UCU are organising a week of action from 7-11 November which will focus on workload stress and bullying, and what you can do about them if you are suffering their effects.

We will be showing a film 'A day in the life of Sarah' and running some lunchtime discussion meetings, as well as publicising practical advice.

Of course managers are also under a great deal of stress to deliver results, so we will also be highlighting the good practice guide produced by the Equality Challenge Unit to help them avoid inadvertent bullying.



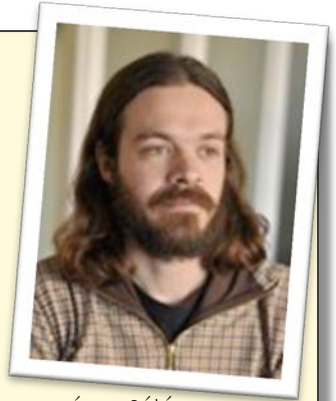
Glittering Prizes

...and of course if you do exceed all your targets, your name will go into the lottery for a personal on-campus parking space!



A few words from our President

Dr Eric Silverman is a researcher based in Social Sciences



Hi - I am the new branch President here in Southampton and I'm pleased to say I'll be able to devote substantial time to UCU duties via our facilities agreement with the university. In the coming year our branch will be very active indeed; with the advent of the Union Cities Project, there will be renewed focus on Southampton and making it a better place to work. I joined UCU out of a desire to assist in improving working conditions for fixed-term staff and early-career researchers and as we go forward this year I believe we are in a great position to make substantial progress on these issues.

We've had tumultuous times here at Southampton; the recent restructuring has had a substantial impact on the entire university. With the departure of our previous President, Christian Defeo, we began to search for new members to take up posts on our Executive committee and I'm pleased to say that for the first time in four years all but one of our committee posts are filled. We have two new fixed-term contract reps, a new environmental rep, a new SUSU liaison and new ordinary member and of course a new President! As we get ready to start a new academic year, having a full team will enable us to push forward our local agenda and give us the strong and varied team we need as the Union Cities project begins.

Are you a member of your local UCU?

Your local UCU works hard to improve pay and conditions, and aims to make the University of Southampton a better place for all those who work and study here. However, a union is only as strong as its members, and we welcome your active involvement. Please contact Amanda Bitouche at ucu@soton.ac.uk to join or find out how you can contribute.

The UCU Office is located at 47 University Road. Tel: 0238 059 2364.

Office hours: Monday to Thursday, 9:15 AM to 4:00 PM.