

University of Leeds University & College Union

Pay rise 2015 (and 2016)

In the 2015 pay bargaining round the employers put forward a take-it-or-leave-it offer of 1%. UCU held a consultative ballot of members in June to help decide on a campaign approach. A majority supported action short of a strike (ASOS) but not strike action. A close vote at the HEC consequently decided that ASOS without the threat of strike action to back it up would be ineffective, the 1% will be 'noted' and a claim for 2016 delivered early.

"Like many members I'm disappointed by how this vote went," says Mark Taylor-Batty, the Leeds UCU President. "But we now need to focus our anger at an effective pay cut of 15% since 2010 on a strong campaign to address some of that erosion in 2016." We need your ideas at a general meeting / action group meetings on how to take this forward. More info at <http://wp.me/p1X58R-qk>

Car parking

The university intends to ramp up car parking charges (by about 50%) from January, to pay for the new 'cheese grater' multi-storey car park (aiming to cover the building costs in one year). The increases fall disproportionately on the lower paid and on those with smaller/greener vehicles. This (or public transport fare increases) will eat up your measly pay rise. We believe that it would be fairer to cover the costs over say 5 years and make the increases more equitable. We welcome your support in demanding changes.

'Prevent' duty

UCU is seriously concerned about the effect of the government's 'Prevent' duty on open discussion in universities. The October General Meeting passed a motion on this, and agreed

to explore options for a boycott. See: www.leedsucu.org.uk/archives/1692

Open University closures

The Open University (OU) is threatening to close 7 regional offices, including the Leeds one, with a potential loss of over 500 jobs.



Demo outside OU Leeds centre on 12th October

Please sign the OU UCU petition at <http://ow.ly/TBuxX> and tweet your support with the hashtag #saveOUregions

Refugee crisis

We believe that the university should be doing far more to support refugees in the present crisis. UCU is pushing the university to offer scholarships for refugee students, to work with the student union to offer practical support, to take an active role in the Leeds City of Sanctuary, and get involved with the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA). In the meantime, here are some suggestions for what you can do: <http://ow.ly/TBxmA>

Trade Union Bill

The Conservative Trade Union Bill aims to utterly decimate trade union rights, making it virtually impossible for us to campaign within the law. Get involved in the fight back! More info at <https://www.tuc.org.uk/tubill>

USS Pensions

Thanks to everyone who completed the USS consultation survey. We don't have access to the results, but we gather it was very negative about the USS proposals. However the proposals haven't changed, and we will all be converted to a 'career average' scheme from next April. They haven't sorted out what will happen about the 'Defined Contribution' part of the new pensions (for those earning over £55k) so that will happen later.

UCU remains very concerned about the USS calculations, which seem designed to lead to a further so-called deficit at the 2017 valuation, leading to more cuts to your pension. In real life, USS investments have gone up 17% in one year, compared to the miniscule rates predicted, and our salaries are going up 1% compared to the 3.6% used in calculations.

More info at <http://wp.me/p1X58R-ru>

Services to be slashed

In the last Integrated Planning Exercise, services were asked to find cuts of £11 million over the next 5 years. This translates for example to £3 million from IT and £1 million from the Library (in the context of publishers costs rising at 6% a year). UCU believes these cuts are unnecessary and unfair, and will also result in additional workloads for academic staff. We will be opposing them in consultative meetings and in Senate. Please encourage academic-related colleagues to join the union so that we can better protect them against any job losses or downgrading.

Casework

UCU caseworkers offer assistance to members with problems at work, including protecting salaries, renewal of contracts, harassment, workload issues and more. For help, or to volunteer as a caseworker (training provided!) contact ucu@leeds.ac.uk

Uniform consultancy

Members in services will also be aware of the recent Uniform activity analysis, whereby managers allocated staff time across categories of work. Our results will be compared to other universities and a benchmark of the 5th lowest will be set. No doubt Leeds will seek to reduce costs (staffing?) in areas where we spend above the benchmark. On the bright side, Leeds will probably be at the bottom of the Russell Group after the aforementioned £11 million cuts - so this will end up being a big waste of staff time and the cost of the Uniform consultants.

Fixed term contracts (FTCs)

It is clear from monitoring university job adverts that the agreed policy on avoidance of fixed term contracts is frequently ignored in some areas. UCU is aiming to put a stop to this practice. The university is also consulting the campus unions about changes to the FTC policy – be assured, we will not support changes detrimental to staff.

Leeds UCU General Meeting

Come to the next General Meeting on Weds 25 Nov, 1 – 2 pm, Roger Stevens LT18

Action Group

Action Group is for any UCU member who'd like to get more involved in campaigns. Meetings are normally every other Tuesday at lunchtime – contact the branch for more details.

Not a member? Join now!

In these difficult times, university staff have never needed a union's protection more. It's easy to join at <https://join.ucu.org.uk>

Contact us:

Email: ucu@leeds.ac.uk
Phone 0113 343 5904 (internal 35904)
Web: www.leedsucu.org.uk
Follow us on Twitter: [@leedsucu](https://twitter.com/leedsucu)