

## University of Leeds University & College Union

### Statutes dispute

Our three day strike in October went very well – lots of energetic pickets all round campus and excellent press coverage, plus great engagement from students, who loved the 'Striking insights' teach-out sessions on subjects ranging from the Paris Commune to Feminist poetry & mushroom hunting. We finished with a vibrant rally on the Parkinson steps addressed by Hilary Benn (Leeds Central MP). See some highlights at:

<https://storify.com/leedsucu/october-strikes-2017>

Management still want to introduce dismissal for 'some other substantial reason' (SOSR), and to remove independent appeal chairs, and now also to move procedures to ordinances so they can be changed more easily. Patient negotiation had no effect, hence our industrial action. So we are moving on to Academic Censure and Boycott of the university, as agreed at UCU General Meetings. The formal letter of censure was sent to the VC on 29 November. This will be followed if necessary by a staged process of UCU colleagues nationally boycotting Leeds. Please give us your views on the boycott, see [www.leedsucu.org.uk/archives/2917](http://www.leedsucu.org.uk/archives/2917) We will also be balloting for further industrial action.

Please also encourage your friends everywhere to sign our petition at <http://bit.ly/2xqQKev>



Dismissal for 'some other substantial reason' has been stopped at **Warwick, Sheffield and UCL**  
**We can stop it too!**

### Pensions



Every 3 years there is a valuation of the USS pension scheme. Due to the peculiar and "recklessly prudent" way this is calculated (see [www.leedsucu.org.uk/archives/2664](http://www.leedsucu.org.uk/archives/2664)), it always comes up with a deficit which leads to contributions going up or pensions going down. This time the employers are proposing to end the USS defined benefit scheme altogether, and putting everyone on defined contributions (which means you know what you pay in but you don't know what pension you will get). This is likely to severely reduce your pension if it goes through, and the situation is extremely serious.

UCU will continue arguing our case and negotiating, but we believe that we need sustained strike action with the aim of hugely disrupting (and not rescheduling) lectures and classes in the New Year to make the employers listen.

You will get a paper ballot in the post in early December. Please vote YES and YES! (Note that anti-trade-union laws mean we have to use postal ballots, we can only 'consult' electronically)

Keep up to date at [www.ucu.org.uk/strikeforuss](http://www.ucu.org.uk/strikeforuss)

## Welcome to all our new members!

We're delighted that so many staff have joined Leeds UCU recently, many to support us over statutes. We're a strong and lively branch, active in our union at all levels, and all the stronger for having you on board! Please come to meetings, talk to your local rep, help distribute leaflets etc.

## University of the Aire

The teach-out sessions during our three day strike were so invigorating that we're keen to continue offering teaching and discussion beyond the curriculum, with more room to explore topics and build relationships with students. We hope to run sessions on occasional Wednesday afternoons in the spring term. If you'd like to offer a topic for the UCU 'University of the Aire' please contact [ucu@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@leeds.ac.uk) with your suggestion(s).

## EU staff rights and Brexit

At the 20 November Open Meeting we discussed family re-union rights, applying for 'settled status', holding your status if you spend time abroad, and EU funding uncertainties. It's good that the online application process for 'settled status' will be 'user friendly', and that EU citizens won't have to prove sickness insurance, but it still puts EU staff under immigration controls and strips them of acquired rights. More details in our Equality Officer's presentation at [www.leedsucu.org.uk/archives/2880](http://www.leedsucu.org.uk/archives/2880)

## Equality conference



Members of the UCU committee attended the UCU Equality conference, which had separate meetings for women, disabled, LGBT, and BME members. We received advice and support on submitting gender pay and casualisation claims to the university and intend to do so soon. To get involved, contact [ucu@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@leeds.ac.uk)

## Christmas with UCU

Look out for UCU-themed decorations and carol singing around the campus in the run up to Christmas – and please join in! And let us know how you would complete a Christmas card to management that begins: "All I want for Christmas is ...."



## Free UCU membership for postgrads

Please pass this on to any postgraduates you know who do paid UCU-covered work (e.g. teaching) – they can join UCU for free and get full membership benefits and voting rights. See [www.ucu.org.uk/free](http://www.ucu.org.uk/free) Note: the pre-existing free (but non-voting) student membership for students who don't teach is unaffected by this.

## Raising problems with management

We're constantly raising issues with management regarding workload and related stress, fixed-term contracts, the Health and Safety reorganisation, IT reorganisation and other IT concerns such as admin rights, so please email [ucu@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@leeds.ac.uk) if you have anything to add to this feedback.

## Ask a colleague to join

We're asking every member to talk to just one colleague about joining. It's easy to join at <https://join.ucu.org.uk>

## Next UCU Meetings

General Meeting dates (see emails for venue) are

- Friday 1 December, 12 noon - 1 pm
- Thursday 15 February, 1 - 2 pm

## Contact us:

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