

## **Declaration of dispute**

Professor Simone Buitendijk  
Vice Chancellor  
The University of Leeds  
LS2 9JT

15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Professor Buitendijk

### **Re: Declaration of dispute – Risk of Potential Redundancies in the School of Medicine & Faculty of Biological Sciences**

I wrote to you on 7<sup>th</sup> January registering a failure to agree on the following issue(s):

- *Failure to rule out the need for compulsory redundancies.*
- *Failure to provide full financial transparency and disclosure regarding the need for financial cuts in the School of Medicine and Faculty of Biological Sciences and opportunities to consult about alternative strategies that could protect jobs.*
- *Failure to provide information about roles/areas that may be in scope of redundancy and the proposals that are being considered for the future work and operation of the two areas.*

*In order to resolve this failure to Agree, UCU are requesting the following immediate action:*

- That the University commits to no compulsory redundancies*
- That after the outcomes of the current VLS exercise are communicated no further action is taken by the University during the pandemic thereby allowing for full meaningful and transparent consultation on the finances within the two areas in scope and the University more generally.*
- That there is full consultation and negotiation regarding any proposed changes to the two areas in scope.*

In that letter I referenced the OCG meeting scheduled for Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January requesting my attendance and asked that the necessary assurances be provided either before or at the meeting to prevent further escalation. I was not formally invited to the meeting by the University, though of course as you may know, I did attend following receipt of an invitation from UCU local officers. My attendance at the meeting caused quite a commotion with the University side resulting in 15 minutes of unnecessary discussion at the beginning of the meeting. I hope this will not occur in future, given that the Terms of Reference of the Organisational Change Group clearly state that union Regional Officials may attend for items of significance.

The change process underway in the Medical School and Biological Sciences was the subject of discussion in the second part of the meeting and information was provided on the outcome of the VLS and an outline time line relating to next steps. Representatives from the University did attempt to placate the recognised trade unions by saying that full consultation and consideration will occur in the future but unfortunately there remains no commitment to no compulsory redundancies and no explicit offer in regards to sharing information relating to finances or plans related to the effect of 20 VLS applications which have been supported.

We are still none the wiser as to the savings targets being considered or proposed, the particular staff groups that are in scope and to what extent the savings created by 20 voluntary leavers will provide for the ongoing job security of the remaining workforce. Given that leavers have been selected by business need and that some staff have been turned down it would seem to UCU that the recent VLS was a targeted scheme with particular roles in scope and to argue otherwise is nothing more than a smokescreen. This brings into question as to whether the process the University is following is lawful as prescribed under S188 of TULRCA. I understand that the recognised trade unions have repeatedly called for more information and transparency and to date this has not been provided and yet targeted staff reductions are going ahead. UCU do not accept that managers are not contemplating compulsory redundancies or have in train a plan for delivering savings.

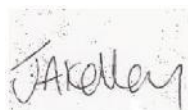
I am also mindful that the university has made no attempt to contact me directly regarding the failure to agree with a view to setting up a series of meetings with myself and local UCU officers to avoid escalation. This would certainly be my expectation in situations such as this.

It is therefore with regret that I am writing to formally register a dispute with you on the issue(s) listed above.

UCU reserves its right to now progress this matter but the institution is aware of the action needed to resolve this issue and we remain open to meaningful negotiations.

This dispute will continue until such time as all the above issues, and any issues related to any potential future industrial action called for by the union in support of the dispute, have been resolved to UCU's satisfaction.

Yours sincerely



**Julie Kelley - Regional Official Yorkshire and Humberside**

cc: Ben Plumpton, Chloe Wallace, Tim Goodall – Leeds University UCU Branch Officers