

# Surrey Branch



# Newsletter



## Pay re-ballot 2018-19: should we *still* be outraged?

***Quick read: UCU will be re-balloting members on Pay in an aggregated ballot in the New Yr.***

You will all have seen the ballot results for the Pay and Equality Ballot 2018. Nationally, UCU achieved a 42% turnout, the highest our union has ever achieved in a national Pay ballot, but it was not enough to leap over that 50% legal threshold. Surrey UCU surpassed this national average with 44%.

Members may also be aware that UCU will be re-balloting in the New Year. This time the results will not be dis-aggregated. All Branches need to improve on their ballot returns if anyone is to get over the finish line.

You may be wondering at this point, is it worth my time? *Should I still be outraged?*

The facts still stand that the latest pay offer does nothing to restore ground lost against inflation (a real terms cut of 21% since 2010) or to address gender inequality or precarious employment in the sector.

More importantly, not passing that finishing line fragments our power to enforce national collective bargaining, a forum that employer's are increasingly reluctant to engage with, and which is of vital importance for all employees across HE.

So in the run up to the re-ballot please keep in mind these wider issues and our collective bargaining power. You give us that power whenever you vote.

As to that 50% hurdle? Let's get over it.

## JNCC Meetings...

The Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee meetings are a platform for directly influencing University policies and procedures in order to make a positive difference for staff and UCU members. The UCU Branch at Surrey puts forward its position, concerns and recommendations on a wide variety of issues, looking to improve the long term welfare of those affected by proposed changes, and acting as the voice of UCU members. The JNCC consists of the University Senior Management Team, HR, and representatives of the three recognised Trade Unions: UCU, Unison and Unite. Here, we report on some important discussions affecting the UCU membership.

### Reporting back on the summer JNCC.

#### Business Update

The University reported back that the level of disruption caused by the industrial action (USS strike) has been managed but there has been an impact... However, the University has worked hard to control costs this year and has performed well as regards the budget...

UCU asked if there is a contingency plan for staff if things go awry on 29th March 2019, when the UK leave the EU. The University responded that it is very hard to answer this question as there are too many unknowns but there is cause to be hopeful that common sense will prevail.

UCU noted that there are contingency plans for Erasmus students in place now and suggested that something equivalent is done for staff at this stage. The University agreed to check details with UCEA

and report back at the next JNCC.

#### HR Systems Update: Appraisals

UCU pressed for information on the plans for online appraisals and the process of moderation. In particular, UCU raised concerns re transition – and the need to ensure staff are using the right system while dual systems are running during the transition. The University responded that the guidance for staff will be clear. UCU also raised the concern as to consistency, in terms of the differing levels of experience of appraisers.

The University advised that where there are significant policy changes, the University will talk to the unions. Any concerns should be shared with Karen Gooday.

The trial of online appraisals for this year

## ...The Voice of UCU

will take place in Chemistry, Sociology, SSA, EFM, Finance, and HR as formal pilots.

The University also noted that they were looking to recruit a communications professional to assist in communications relating to the project. There is the offer of training demos and drop-ins to try the system. UCU stated that this is also an opportunity to train line managers in appraisal techniques.

### USS Pensions Update

The University gave its version of a USS update in the form of a presentation.

It was noted that the University expected an initial increase in contributions in April 2019.

Additional costs of 24.4% would impact the University hugely as well as the increase to individuals of 12.2%. An additional 1% increase is a cost of c.£900k to the University. The University would need to find c.£6m of savings to fund such an increase. This funding requirement will have an impact on staff across the whole University, not just those in USS, in terms of job security.

**UCU members should note that these costs are based on the USS consultation undertaken in Autumn 2018 and is not based on the projected figures recommended in the JEP report, which are now endorsed by both UCU and the employers.**

### Pay negotiations

The University requested an update from all three campus unions, asking if they had an update on the national position of the unions.

Unite have launched a consultative ballot on whether to accept/reject pay offer. Unison will be balloting to reject pay offer. The Pay offer has been rejected by UCU via a consultative ballot. A UCU Ballot in regard to industrial action will run from August to October.

The University unfortunately responded with its usual narrative that any retention or increase in staff benefits will adversely affect the budget causing potential negative consequences for current staff....

**If you have any questions regarding JNCC meetings, would like access to JNCC Minutes, or would like to get involved in any way, please do not hesitate to get in contact with us:**

Colette Maxfield, UCU Branch Administrator: [cmaxfield@ucu.org.uk](mailto:cmaxfield@ucu.org.uk)



## Negotiations @UCUSurrey on the behalf of staff on precarious contracts

*Quick read: @UCUSurrey is negotiating with the University on its use of precarious contracts and has been presented with data on the use of Associate/fixed term contracts. Future discussions will concentrate on the transition of Associate staff to fractional contracts and the establishment of hourly multipliers.*

Our Regional Official met University management on the 3rd October to reinstate negotiations over the conditions of staff on precarious contracts here at University of Surrey. He was attended by UCU member Chris Dickens who has recently stepped up, at our Branch AGM, to the role of Anti-Casualisation Officer. This meeting was set up in response to our letter requesting a comprehensive agreement that improves the terms for staff on insecure contracts.



Campaigning against enforced casualised contracts is a national UCU priority but also a growing concern at local Branch level as the employers are increasingly

moving away from engaging with national collective bargaining. Very little joint work was agreed by the employers as part of the UCU Pay and Equality claim 2018. It is therefore vital that UCU addresses this issue at an institutional level.

During the first meeting, the University provided data on the number of 'live' associates currently employed, around a quarter of which are employed on permanent contracts and the majority based in FASS. The University also provided data on how many Readers, Professors and Teaching Fellows are on fixed term contracts.

A discussion took place over the point at which associates should be offered fractional contracts. It was agreed that both sides would explore a formula that combined the number of hours worked and length of service. The University was unable to provide figures that detailed how many hours associates worked but this will be followed up at a second meeting.

The subject of a multiplier was also discussed (the sector norm is 2.5 hours per 1 hour of teaching to cover prep and marking). The University is reluctant to consider a standardised multiplier but will consider a subject by subject formula. Work is being carried out on a workload allocation model which will inform multiplier discussions. UCU will receive a presentation on this work at the next meeting.

**For more info: [cmaxfield@ucu.org.uk](mailto:cmaxfield@ucu.org.uk)**

## Update: employers' views on JEP recommendations

***Quick read: We are pleased to announce that as of the 8th November, the employers have accepted the recommendations of the JEP report as to the future of USS.***

**Universities UK's consultation with employers on the recommendations of the Joint Expert Panel closed on 30 October 2018.**

Following initial analysis of the responses, Universities UK has issued the following statement:

"The responses – received from over 120 employers who collectively employ over 90% of the scheme's active members – are still being analysed. However, it is clear that there is support from most employers for the JEP's recommendations, subject to further details about risk and a favourable response from the USS Trustee and The

Pensions Regulator.

"Employers have also expressed their view that a second phase for the JEP is essential as part of developing a longer-term position for USS.

"We look forward to taking these initial views into discussions with UCU, and with the USS Trustee, over the coming weeks as we seek a jointly agreed solution.

"Universities UK will publish a further update including summary results once all responses have been analysed."

The statement can be viewed here:  
<https://www.ussemployers.org.uk/news/update-employers-views-jep-recommendations>



## The *Low Down* on the *Coming Up...*

### NOUS Report

At the Autumn JNCC (formal minutes not yet released), UCU again requested an update on when the NOUS report will be released. The report focussed on programme delivery and there is a concern that the conclusions may be used to support plans for restructuring. We will keep members updated on developments.

### Online Appraisal System

UCU followed up on several concerns as to the new online appraisal system (please see JNCC item on pg 2), which is currently being piloted in several departments. In particular, the process itself has been altered so that appraisees not comfortable with particular targets cannot easily note disagreement. In addition, the ability for appraisees to note that they are dissatisfied with the completed form has been diminished with the online submission structure. Please get in touch if you have feedback on this issue.

### Timetabling / Panopto

UCU continue to raise the fact that Panopto facilities are not suitable for the policies that the University is pursuing. Members continue to feedback that equipment is unreliable.

We also continue to raise the fact that the Timetabling policy and the Panopto policy contradict each other as to what is expected of staff members.

### The University budget

Staff may have attended or watched the recent presentation by Professor Max Lu, which included information on the current financial position of the University. UCU is currently querying the figures presented as the University has not yet supplied the data to back up the graph-based assertions. A common narrative of Universities at present is to blame the rise in USS costs as causing financial difficulty, even though no change to the pension costs has yet been imposed (until at least April). We will continue to challenge any such narrative until data has been provided to justify budget assertions.

### REF / Probation targets

UCU has queried the fact that targets for staff on probation in relation to REF are often equal or even higher than the targets for established University of Surrey staff members. We will keep you updated on the University response.

**Further updates to follow.**

## Surrey UCU Committee Roles: 2018-2019

**Surrey UCU held its AGM on Monday 29th October, and the following roles were confirmed for the upcoming academic year:**

President - **Vacant**

Secretary - **Vacant**

Casework Coordinator - Alison Cottell

Treasurer - Annette Kratz

Anti-Casualisation Officer—Chris Dickens

Equality and Diversity Rep - Annette Kratz

Health and safety Rep - **Vacant**

FHMS Rep - Alison Cottell

FEPS Rep - **Vacant**

FASS Rep - Lampros Stergioulas

Committee Member - Rosalind Malcolm

Committee Member - Nigel Gilbert

Committee Member - Lampros Stergioulas

Committee Member - Barbara Steel

**Surrey UCU has an agreed allowance of facilities time (paid time) for UCU reps. If you were interested in a vacant role, you would be entitled to reasonable paid time off and facilities to undertake union duties and attend UCU training. If anyone would like more information on this topic, please do not hesitate to get in contact: [cmaxfield@ucu.org.uk](mailto:cmaxfield@ucu.org.uk)**

### Join UCU today!

Join UCU now, it takes only 10 minutes online: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/join>

Alternatively you can ring the Membership Team: 0333 207 0719

Non academic staff at University of Surrey could choose to join our sister union UNISON. Academic-related staff may consider joining UCU or Unite – contact a representative to discuss which is most suitable for you.



Unions are effective through the strength of their membership. Members can contribute in ways that suit their personalities, spare time, skills and capabilities. All queries on this subject will be warmly welcomed: [cmaxfield@ucu.org.uk](mailto:cmaxfield@ucu.org.uk)