

# UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION

## UNIVERSITY OF SURREY BRANCH NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2014 ISSUE



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## STATUTE CULL

### **Statutes, promotion pathways and the REF: a threat to future employment.**

UCU members who regularly receive our e-mails will be aware that the local branch officers have been in meetings with management on changes to the University Statutes and changes in promotion pathways for academic staff. These issues in isolation are concerning, but taken together they pose a serious threat to the future employment prospects of many academic staff here at Surrey.

The current management proposals on Statutes will completely strip away any safeguards on redundancy processes, disciplinary procedures, grievance procedures or termination of contracts. Branch officers are still in talks with management on these proposals but so far all the points we have made have been completely ignored. UCU wants to ensure that any panels hearing matters of termination of contract have

an academic member of staff on the panel. We also want legal representation and medical expertise on panels discussing termination of contract on medical grounds. It is important that these safeguards are enshrined in Statutes.

Unfortunately, management proposals currently see the Statutes shrinking from a 23 page document to three pages. All the processes have been moved to ordinances to make it easier to change them in future. These proposals will, in short, make it much easier to sack academic staff. All checks and balances have been removed. Power will be centralised with the executive board and Council will no longer be involved in discussing major redundancies at the University.

These proposed changes are bad enough, but when you consider that the current University mission for the 2020 REF is to have 100% of

academic staff submitted, and with a current submission rate around 70% (based on management's figures), 30% of academic staff could be no longer wanted. Link this with the three tracks of promotion which are teaching only, lecturer (research and teaching) and research only, then one can begin to see a scenario whereby numbers of staff might be "persuaded" to move from a lecturer post to a teaching only one. We already have evidence that this is starting to happen. The other possibility is more restructuring, with (Surprise! Surprise!), those not currently entered into the REF the likely candidates for job losses.

Let's be clear, the University cannot force someone to change their contract from lecturing to teaching only, but we all know the pressures that can be

put on staff to accept changes unwillingly. As a union branch we need to be ready to meet such future challenges. This means having an active membership willing to stand up and defend their working conditions and jobs. The first step on this road is to take part in branch meetings, keep well informed and join in the debate.



## CHANGES IN PROMOTION PATHWAYS – A THREAT TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The “Tutor” role has long been considered divisive in offering poorer terms and conditions and fewer opportunities for career progression for staff who manage a high teaching load compared to staff who manage a high research load. When the University announced that it would be reviewing the teaching role UCU



welcomed that the issue was being addressed, although members raised concerns about some of the details in the proposal. A drawback, members felt, was that one could not progress beyond “Senior Teaching Fellow” without developing a significant portfolio of pedagogical research. The very best teachers may not have a background in pedagogy as a research

discipline, nor time in their schedules to develop this. Another common opinion was that the proposed title of “Teaching Fellow” is perceived by staff to be diminutive compared to “Lecturer”, and that the University itself has turned down external examiners from other universities on the basis that they are Teaching Fellows, despite listing external examining as one of the criteria in its own promotion documents for the teaching pathway.

During meetings with management it became clear that there was little willingness to address the issues raised, and therefore that the proposals do nothing to rectify the divisiveness caused by the current bifurcation of academic roles. It will remain very difficult for teaching staff to achieve the status of, or to be remunerated at the equivalent rate of a Reader or Professor despite one of the primary functions of a university being education and despite one of the main

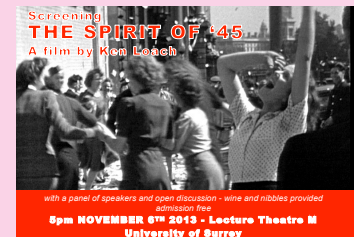
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## News in Brief

### Statutes Petition

As part of the campaign to safeguard the Statutes under which the University is run, UCU is collecting signatures on a petition to be presented to the Privy Council. Please look out for and sign the petition and contact your union reps (see back page) if you can help to gather signatures.

### Screening of Ken Loach’s ‘The Spirit of ’45



The southeast region TUC in conjunction with Surrey UCU hosted a screening of the acclaimed film in November. The film show was followed by a lively debate on the role of the trades unions in protecting public services



### Sabbatical Leave Under Scrutiny

New policies are being developed on sabbatical leave, which state, that individuals ‘are encouraged to seek external funding, wherever appropriate, to cover the costs of replacement staffing during their absence’. UCU is monitoring developments closely in order to avoid erosion of members, rights and privileges

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sources of income being from students' fees. While the University maintains that everyone who teaches should aspire to be excellent, there is little in the proposals to acknowledge that it is harder to maintain excellence if you have a high teaching load than if you have only a few lectures to give each year.

Regrettably, very few changes to the original proposals were offered, and in a recent ballot of UCU members 100% of those who voted, voted against the final offer. Management have suggested that they will declare this ballot invalid because advice given

to members prior to the vote was perceived to include "significant errors of fact": this referred to UCU's claim that increasingly an academic is defined as someone who is in REF, and that staff not likely to be in REF 2020 may be asked to switch, or be "restructured" to a teaching contract. These claims were made because the University aims for 100% of academic staff to be in REF 2020, and Teaching Fellows will not be classed as academic staff. Additionally, previous restructures have seen "Lecturer" posts become "Tutor" posts and some lecturers have already had pressure put on them to switch because they are not

in REF, which also calls into question the extent to which the REF Code of Practice is being followed. Therefore UCU stands by the claim; we will advise our members as we see fit.

The Teaching Fellow role is due to be implemented later this year and the University maintains that this is an excellent career pathway that properly recognises and rewards teaching – the University should not fear people being told by UCU that they may be in a category of staff who will be asked to move into this career pathway if it is truly an attractive option.

## ATHENA SWAN OR UGLY DUCKLING?

### Gender and race/ethnicity inequalities at the University of Surrey

Athena SWAN awards recognise and celebrate good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting women in higher education. Currently Surrey is trying to obtain a silver Athena Swan award. But in terms of equal opportunities for women and people (both male and female) of different ethnic backgrounds, the University of Surrey is still at the Ugly Duckling stage. A document produced by the University and College Union, UCU, in November 2012 entitled 'The position of women and BME<sup>1</sup> staff in professorial roles in the UK HEIs' shows figures



that are "really quite shocking".

### The Representation Gap at a National Level

The representation gap is an objective index measuring the difference in the percentage of women and BME staff at Senior Lecturer level and at Professorial level. At a national level,

If women were represented in the

professoriate in the same proportion as they are represented among non-professorial academic staff, there would be 8,160 female professors. That means we have a representation gap of 4,710 female professors. (UCU, 2012:3).

According to HESA staff data for 2010/11, 13.0% (19,405) of non-professorial academics are BME staff but they hold only 7.3% (1,195) of professorial roles.

### At Surrey: Gender

According to Appendix 3 of the UCU document, which is about gender differences in pay between male and female professors, the University of Surrey ranks 43<sup>rd</sup> out of 81

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# THE BID FOR



There was an impressive turnout at picket lines at the University of Surrey on 31<sup>st</sup> October where a one-day strike was staged in support of a fair pay rise for university staff. Students responded sympathetically, at least one lorry due to deliver on campus turned back and the mood was buoyant with local bus drivers on the route through campus hooting their approval as they went by.

The action is part of a nationwide response to a pay offer of just 1%, which has been resoundingly rejected by the largest three unions in the sector, UCU, UNISON and Unite.

The squeeze on staff pay comes at a time when pay and benefits for university leaders increased, on average, by 8%. The average pay and pensions package for vice-chancellors is around £25,000 and our own vice

chancellor is at the top of the league earning a handsome £320,000 per annum.

According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency HESA, Universities are sitting on reserves of around £10bn (even after pension liabilities) and yet employers say they cannot afford to help staff whose pay has fallen in real terms by 13% since 2009.

A second nationwide strike was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December by which time management at Surrey seem to have taken fright. It was clear from the start of the day that security staff had been instructed to phone the police if pickets asked car drivers to take a leaflet by standing in the road on the driver's side.



Security staff were also instructed to use surveillance cameras to film those picketing. A union member was arrested by the police and charged with obstructing the highway. (see 'Ruminations From A Police Cell' page 6).



However the police were not in a position to press charges and the person was released. UCU Surrey notes that strikers have immunities under the Trade Union Acts, and one of these is the limitation on the immunities under the Trade Union Acts, and one of these is the limitation on the otherwise very wide interpretations open to the police on what constitutes "obstruction". No obstructing of the

of 2.0% rease sed on 1/12 + £000s	Cost of 3.0% increase (based on 2011/12 + 1%) £000s	Operating surplus/deficit 2011/12 £000s	HEI RESERVES	Total Reserves. Balance 31 July 2012 £000s
271	1,906	4,544	Canterbury Christ Church University	34,452
911	2,866	9,517	The University of Brighton	150,117
462	693	2,379	The University of Chichester	33,588
016	3,024	14,302	The University of Kent	106,631
246	3,369	6,610	The University of Surrey	90,032
863	2,795	13,749	The University of Sussex	23,939

A marking boycott will always be an absolute last resort for UCU members so the HEC is seeking to escalate this dispute in a careful way. However, if current action does not produce any movement, we will have to move to a marking boycott. No one enjoys taking this action but we cannot allow a situation where your employer is allowed to impose pay cut upon pay cut, year on year, accumulating surpluses and awarding themselves huge pay rises. That's bad for you, bad for your families and ultimately bad for education.

## RUMINATIONS FROM A POLICE CELL

**Events of the 3<sup>rd</sup> November described by Unite Union member Dr. C. Jaynes**

Arriving at the picket line, I find my colleagues creeping along the edge of the road - the police have already threatened them with arrest if they give leaflets to drivers coming in to the University. I'm not sure what modern pickets are supposed to be doing –



certainly not the obstruction and intimidation of the strikes of the 1970's! But if we can't even hand out leaflets we might as well be in North Korea! I exaggerate, but anyway, as soon as I put the jacket on and go into the road the security guys shout at me to desist, and talk urgently into their radios. Before long the police turn up and explain that I am "obstructing the public highway", which by the way is a

criminal offence! I assure them that I am not, since I am only inviting drivers to take my leaflets, and not forcing anyone to stop (or even slow down!).

Never mind, on go the handcuffs, out come all the contents of my pockets, and in to the van with me! The police are very proper, and after inviting me to accept a caution (which I ignore of course, since I admitted no law-breaking), give me my own comfy cell, complete with blankets and WC. Then we wait for the solicitor to arrive, organised by the Union but paid under legal aid, since the alleged offence was criminal.

Eventually we get to the formal interview. The solicitor has explained to me that they were highly likely to charge me, irrespective of the interview, and that it would go to a magistrate with a 95% probability of

being found guilty, irrespective of the evidence. But I lose nothing in explaining my position, and gain the possibility of sympathy. Just don't pretend to know the law (don't claim to be "going about your lawful business"! ). Instead show that you reasonably thought you were in the right.

What was interesting was that the CCTV evidence (with yours truly as the star of the show) was thought by my interviewer when we started to unequivocally demonstrate my guilt, but taken by me to demonstrate the opposite! Which cars were forced to stop? Or even slow down? Afterwards the solicitor said that he expected the interview to appear in the textbooks as a model of how to do it. Then, five minutes later, much to our surprise, release without charge!





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universities. This means that we are not nearly the best but also not the worst of the universities with regard to gender equality. We are just around the mid point and therefore we have a long way to go to become one of the best universities in its treatment of women. Female professors at Surrey are on average paid 8.3% less than male professors at Surrey. On average women professors at Surrey earn £69,118 while male professor earn £75,369 (Table 5 pg. 41)

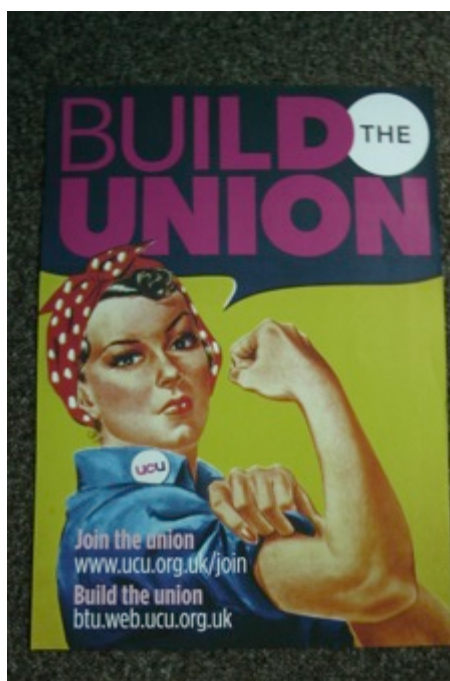
### At Surrey: Race/Ethnicity

According to Appendix 4 (relating to BME inequalities), the University of Surrey ranks 78/81 i.e. we are the 4th worst university in the UK in the representation of BME staff out of 81 Universities listed. The worst University is Middlesex with a representation gap of 20.2%, next comes Coventry (18.0%), Aston (17.4%) and then Surrey (16.2%). The unit of measurement is the percentage point gap between BME academics as a percentage of professors compared with non-professors whose ethnicity is known.

If you are a woman or if you are a person of black and/or minority ethnic origin working at Surrey University and are stuck under a glass ceiling, you

now have a picture of the facts! We have a long way to go in righting these inequalities before the Athena Ugly Duckling can turn into an Athena Swan.

As a first step towards communicating to senior management the realities that some of us have to contend with, if you are willing to be interviewed about some of the issues you face as a woman or a BME person (male or female) please contact Rob Fidler [r.fidler@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:r.fidler@surrey.ac.uk)



## IF YOU HAVE SUFFERED RACE DISCRIMINATION...

Racism is widespread in further and higher education. UCU is opposed to race discrimination in whatever form it takes. Colleges and universities have a legal obligation to prevent racism towards staff and students. There are a number of ways of challenging racism and giving support to lecturers

suffering from it. If you think you may have been racially discriminated against then UCU has clear procedures to support you.

Don't approach management until you have taken advice from a UCU local representative (see branch

## Networking For Change

UCU actively encourages and supports the development of equality Net-works locally and regionally. Communication with other black people is vital to share information, garner support and compare successes. You may find it useful to consider the following:

- When was the last time you communicated with a black colleague?
- Have you ever met with other black colleagues to form or discuss forming a network
- Have you approached your branch/local association with a view to setting up a black members' network at your place of work?

If you are experiencing discrimination at work it may be that the problem is more widespread than you think. Communicating with colleagues in a mutually supportive way can help uncover more systemic institutional failings. The institution may be persuaded to provide a meeting space for your group as part of their wider obligations under the Equality Act.

For more information on gender and race/ethnicity issues see [www.ucu.org.uk/equality](http://www.ucu.org.uk/equality)

contact details right)

In the first instance, you should contact your departmental union rep or your UCU branch/LA secretary, although you may find it useful to talk to other members of your branch as well, particularly your branch equality officer.

Your local branch or representative will nominate someone who will be your first point of contact. They should be able to listen to your concerns, and discuss with you the best way to raise them with management

You should keep a careful diary of events and save any relevant information (letters, emails, documents) that may relate to your case.

Your employer has certain minimum legal responsibilities. These are set out in the NATFHE (one of UCU's parent unions) document, Handling Race Discrimination Claims. There are copies on the web at [www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2305](http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2305). You should make sure that you have seen a copy of this document. Your employer should have a written procedure to deal with claims of racial

discrimination or harassment.

There are many non-confrontational ways of asking your managers to prevent racism. These can include talking to or writing to your immediate manager, or their manager, if the problem is with your supervisor. Later, you can take a complaint through the college grievance or harassment procedures, or initiate a race discrimination questionnaire. If your employer fails to take action after these procedures have been exhausted, then they may be liable to legal action.

If you decide that the only way to achieve redress is through an Employment Tribunal, then to be eligible for help under UCU's legal scheme, you must have been a UCU member for 90 days. Meanwhile, any application must be made to an Employment Tribunal within three months of the discrimination. Bear in mind that the success rate of race discrimination claims at Tribunal is low, so where possible it is best to resolve the issue within the institution. Tackling your concerns can also help prevent the same happening to other staff



## UCU University of Surrey Branch Committee 2013/4

Chair: Rob Fidler (r.fidler@surrey.ac.uk)

Secretary: Alison Cottell  
(a.cottell@surrey.ac.uk)

Casework Coordinators: Amanda Cleary  
(a.cleary@surrey.ac.uk) & Rosalind  
Malcolm (r.malcolm@surrey.ac.uk)

Press and Publicity Officer: Lois Davis  
(l.davis@surrey.ac.uk)

Health and Safety Rep: Rosalind Malcolm  
(r.malcolm@surrey.ac.uk)

Treasurer: Adrian Coyle  
(a.coyle@surrey.ac.uk)

Membership Secretary: Leslie Blake  
(l.w.blake@surrey.ac.uk) & Adrian Coyle  
(a.coyle@surrey.ac.uk)

Equal Opps Rep: Ellen Seiss  
(e.seiss@surrey.ac.uk)

Web Administrator: Adam McNamara  
(a.mcnamara@surrey.ac.uk)

Part time/Fractional Rep: Maria Xenitidou  
(m.xenitidou@surrey.ac.uk)

Early Career Researcher Rep: Monomita  
Nandy (m.nandy@surrey.ac.uk)

FAHS Reps: Henry Hogh (Psychology)  
(h.hogh@surrey.ac.uk) and Nigel Gilbert  
(Sociology) (n.gilbert@surrey.ac.uk)

FBEL Rep: Blanca Mamutse  
(b.mamutse@surrey.ac.uk)

FEPS Rep: Paul Stevenson  
(p.stevenson@surrey.ac.uk)

FHMS Rep: Nimmi Hutnik  
(n.hutnik@surrey.ac.uk)

Central Services Rep: Rob Fidler  
(r.fidler@surrey.ac.uk)