

CONFIRMED

LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

JOINT CONSULTATIVE AND NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 30th October 2024

PRESENT: Ms S Weir (Chair), Ms S Beecroft, Mr A Catterall, Mr B Grice, Ms K Jones, Mr M Long, Dr S Mercer, Ms L Thompson Dr K Wilson, Dr A Yeates

APOLOGIES: Professor S Davismoon, Professor A Nagar

SECRETARIAT: Mr M Jones

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

Members had received minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2024. Re actum 3i, Ms Beecroft informed members that twelve colleagues had taken advantage of the voluntary severance scheme, rather than thirteen. Pending this correction the minutes were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

Re redistribution of Professional Services staff during the faculty restructure, Dr Wilson confirmed that she had contacted Mr Catterall in relation to this.

Re peer review for internal REF, Mr Catterall confirmed that time spent on this activity would come out of the research allocation.

Re maternity leave cover, Mr Catterall confirmed that he had contacted Dr Yeates in relation to this.

Re parking enforcement, Mr Long asked for further detail as to the process by which four fines per month can be waived. Ms Beecroft undertook to look into this.

ACTION: Ms Beecroft to look into criteria for waivers, as above.

Mr Long raised the issue of a colleague who had paid a fine but later discovered that the transaction had not gone through. Ms Beecroft asked Mr Long to contact her re this.

ACTION: Mr Long to contact Ms Beecroft, as above.

Re carers policy, Dr Yeates asked whether this would be tabled for discussion. Mr Catterall responded that he believed Ms Lowther had sent the draft policy to UCU for feedback, and undertook to check this.

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Re flexible working, Dr Yeates noted that the version of the policy on the website had not been updated in line with recent developments in this area. Mr Catterall undertook to look into this.

ACTION: Mr Catterall to check policy, as above.

3. UCU Items

(i) Jobs crisis in HE

Dr Mercer noted the increased number of higher education institutions making redundancies. Dr Mercer requested that decisions to suspend courses be communicated to colleagues teaching those courses in a clear and timely manner. Mr Catterall informed members that in all decisions on course suspensions the potential impact on jobs is given high priority. Mr Catterall added that Dr Haughan is available to meet with UCU in relation to this. Dr Yeates asked for assurance that, in instances where course closures could result in job losses, consultation with unions would be undertaken. Mr Catterall assured members that consultation within the legal requirements of dealing with potential redundancy would take place. Dr Yeates asked whether it would be possible for the University to take a more collaborative approach to potential course closures, with more input from academics. Mr Catterall responded that he would look into what processes are currently in place in relation to this.

ACTION: Mr Catterall to liaise with the DVC into processes in relation to potential course closures. UCU to contact with dates and times if they wished to meet with DVC on matter

(ii) Proposal for special leave policy

Members had received UCU's proposal for a special leave policy. Dr Yeates drew attention to a variation in practice across the University in relation to members of staff being required to work from home eg when looking after a child who is off school due to illness. Ms Thompson informed members that no member of staff should be required to take days on which they are working from home as annual leave. Ms Thompson added that the University's Carers Policy, which is currently in a twelve month trial period, may potentially have a positive impact on this area. Mr Catterall voiced the opinion that the additional days proposed by UCU's policy could, when taken alongside carers leave, compassionate leave, liturgical days etc, result in an anomalously high number of leave days and that the University would continue to look at separate policies for now rather than a combined special leave policy..

(iii) Scholasticide in Gaza

Dr Mercer asked whether the University could look into ways in which it could assist in ameliorating the situation in Gaza, and asked whether the University has any links with universities in that area. Ms Beecroft and Mr Catterall undertook to look into this.

ACTION: Ms Beecroft and Mr Catterall to look into University links with scholastic institutions in Israel.

Dr Mercer asked whether it would be possible for the University to offer help to students in Palestine and Gaza. Mr Catterall asked Dr Mercer to contact him re this, adding that he would discuss it with UEB.

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ACTION: Dr Mercer to contact Mr Catterall, as above.

Dr Mercer informed members that some UCU members had expressed concern about discussing the Gaza situation in class, or responding to student questions about the situation. Mr Catterall informed members that he would contact Dr Haughan to see if there had been any issues and would pick this up in the new academic year if required.

Dr Wilson informed members that a number of Jewish colleagues had contacted her saying they have felt uncomfortable with some conversations on campus. Mr Catterall undertook to relay this to heads of schools and departments.

ACTION: Mr Catterall to contact heads, as above.

(iv) Menopause Policy

Dr Yeates reminded members that UCU had received the draft Menopause Policy and responded with a number of comments. Dr Yeates noted that the document is now on the website under the title 'Guidance for supporting colleagues experiencing menopause'. Dr Yeates asked whether a formal policy will be produced. Mr Catterall undertook to discuss the possibility of changing the guidelines to a policy with colleagues in Personnel.

ACTION: Mr Catterall to discuss with colleagues, as above.

(v) Promotions

Dr Yeates drew members' attention to a perceived increase in expectation for staff to be able to identify the impact of their activities upon the University when applying for promotion, and welcomed recent guidance in relation to this. Dr Yeates asked whether this guidance has been flagged to staff. Mr Catterall undertook to check this, and whether staff had raised issues with Personnel in relation to this.

ACTION: Mr Catterall to check re guidance, as above.

Dr Yeates drew members' attention to the current situation whereby colleagues are working on their promotion applications during the marking and assessment period and asked if anything could be done about this. Mr Catterall confirmed that colleagues in question had been given the same length of time to apply, and that the time line had been moved forward. Mr Catterall undertook to look into the timing of the promotions process.

ACTION: Mr Catterall to look into timing of promotions process.

4. UNISON Items

(i) HERA Processes

Dr Wilson cited an instance where a colleague going through the HERA process was informed by their manager that the process would not be progressing as there is currently no budget for upgrades. Mr Catterall informed members that this is not the case, adding that 22 members of professional services staff have been upgraded in the past 24 months. Dr Wilson cited an instance where two colleagues are managed by someone who is not employed by the University and is away from campus for a substantial amount of time; Dr Wilson added that in the absence of their manager the colleagues in question are required to act beyond their pay grades. Mr Catterall asked Dr Wilson to contact him re this.

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ACTION: Dr Wilson to contact Mr Catterall, as above.

(ii) Ethical Investments

Mr Long raised the issue of ethical investments. Ms Beecroft informed members that the University's investment with Rathbones has now been closed, adding that the University no longer holds any stocks or shares. Ms Beecroft added that the University will not be placing funds with Barclays, due to concerns in relation to modern slavery. Ms Beecroft informed members that the University has divested from fossil fuel investments. Ms Beecroft informed members that the University currently banks with Lloyds and Santander and asked any members with concerns in relation to either of these banks to contact her. Mr Long asked whether the University would consider putting in place a policy in relation to Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) re Israel. Ms Beecroft undertook to look into this.

ACTION: Ms Beecroft to look into BDS, as above.

5. Management Items

(i) Finance Update

Ms Beecroft informed members that the March Reforecast predicts an end of year deficit of £2.9m. Ms Beecroft informed members that this is a substantial improvement on the position at the start of the financial year. Ms Beecroft added that the University has achieved the target set by Project 2028. Ms Beecroft thanked all colleagues for their work in achieving this result. Ms Beecroft informed members that the first draft of the 2024-25 budget is currently in production. Dr Mercer asked whether any further voluntary severance schemes, or any redundancies, are planned. Ms Beecroft reminded members that it is never possible to definitively rule out action of this kind, but added that the University will continue to do everything it can to avoid compulsory redundancy.

(ii) Student Numbers

Ms Beecroft informed members that applications to the University are currently 3% ahead of the sector. Ms Beecroft added that UG applications are down by 1%, while Foundation Year applications are up by 33%. Ms Beecroft added that as at 12th May 2024 the University has 100 more students than at the same time last year.

(iii) People Strategy

Mr Catterall reminded members that the draft People Strategy had been sent to both unions, and stakeholder groups. Mr Catterall asked the unions if they had any issues to raise in relation to the strategy ahead of its presentation to UEB and Staffing Committee. Dr Mercer asked for clarification in relation to the reference to 'entrepreneurial skills'. Mr Catterall responded that this section could potentially be removed and would discuss this with UEB. Re page nine, Dr Mercer asked whether reference to workload could be included in the Wellbeing section. Mr Catterall undertook to relay this suggestion to UEB.

6. AOB

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Dr Wilson raised the issue of flexible retirement for professional services staff and suggested that succession planning could be given a greater priority in this process.