

AGM
Minutes
17 May 2021

10.00-12.00 via Teams

1. Approval of Minutes 15 January 2021

Approved.

2. Matters arising

Overview from outgoing Chair:

Spring 2020: process of new Branch started.

Huge thanks to Regional officer, Barry Jones, for invaluable help in setting up the Branch.

Late August 2020: Branch recognised by UCU.

RAIUL then approached for recognition: regular meetings took place to draft recognition agreement of Branch to represent all faculty, full- and part time, including RIASA, on issues to include pay, contracts, conditions, Staff not represented – no mandate to request this as so few staff are members of UCU.

Feb 2021: RAIUL has a fully-functioning, fully-recognised UCU Branch. Great achievement, after many years.

Several suggestions made to SMT¹ before recognition. Few accepted, which made it more difficult to make demands re Summer School teaching.

Request made at last JNCC² meeting: to allow faculty members to teach Summer Schools face to face OR online according to preference. SMT rejected this.

Branch busy creating procedures, eg byzantine setup for bank, website for Branch website, Branch email, new officers, incl. RIASA officer, Adjunct Officer.

Branch started conversations with Senate Chair => cooperative loop between Branch and Senate. Actions may be decided by Senate => actioned by the Branch.

There is now a Branch Rep on the new workload model working group: Sam Bracey: a very positive impact from the UCU Branch.

To do: greater input/energy to Branch: please provide ideas.

Very difficult year for Richmond, working round the clock, working remotely – hard to establish/maintain dialogue among UCU members.

Institutional base now exists, all is possible.

Working on RAIUL campus will enable better flow of ideas/campaigns.

¹ Senior Management Team at RAIUL.

² Joint Negotiating and Consultation Committee: Meeting of UCU Branch representatives with representatives from SMT

Outgoing Chair wishes all the best to the Committee going forward – it has been a great team effort – it's thanks to all that we have achieved so much. Branch Committee membership is voluntary work on top of full time jobs – a lot of work.

UCU Branch thanks to outgoing Chair for her hard work and for all that she has enabled us to achieve.

3. The Branch Committee proposes to amend section 8 of the Constitution, adding the following Officers to the Branch Committee:

MOTION: *Amendment to omit Adjunct Faculty Officer and Employee Rep Officer, as former already in place, the latter should not be enshrined in Branch constitution.*

PASSED unanimously

MOTION: To add RIASA, H&S, Green officers

PASSED unanimously

8.7 RIASA Officer

The RIASA Officer represents the particular needs and concerns of faculty located at the Richmond International Academic and Soccer Academy, with the goal of ensuring equity for all, improving working conditions, and career progression, listening to, and keeping all RIASA faculty informed about UCU and RAIUL activities.

8.9 Health and Safety Officer

The Health and Safety Officer will monitor policy of the university that affects the health and safety of members' working conditions. They will also be the liaison between the central UCU Office and established network of health and safety reps and the Richmond UCU Branch on matters and initiatives related to health and safety.

8.10 Green Officer

The Green Officer will have knowledge of and commitment to relevant issues, and be willing to undertake training according to the needs of UCU, monitor the implementation of green policies within the institution, and, where appropriate, encourage and support local negotiations on green and environmental matters. Where appropriate, they will also provide information, encouragement and support to members about green issues."

4. Ratification of Branch's Committee Officers

- Chair: SUE PELL
- Secretary: SAM BRACEY
- Treasurer: Vacant

- Membership Secretary: IVAN COHEN
- Equality Officer: SHUNA NEILSON
- Staff Officer: Vacant
- RIASA Officer: SAM BRACEY
- Adjunct Officer: CATHERINE DILLE
- Health and Safety Officer: Vacant
- Green Officer: WAYNE CLARK
- Committee member: MARTIN BROWN
- Committee Members: Vacant

MOTION: to ratify the Committee motion

- Approved unanimously

5. Open nominations for Treasurer, Health and Safety Officer, Staff Officer:

Request for nominations

- **H&S: Dom Alessio: Approved.**
- **Treasurer: *still vacant***
- **Staff Member: *still vacant***

6. Proposed Motion:

“The branch expresses its solidarity and thanks to the inaugural branch committee members for their tireless work on behalf of current and future colleagues over the past year.”

- PASSED**

Comments:

- HUGE workload for Branch Committee – more people at this meeting from Committee than not.
- No time out for teaching but UCU officer workload recognised as Service in RAIUL workload model
- Workload of Branch officers needs to be brought up again.
- Branch work now need to be very focussed on key issues
- HUGE workload at the start to set up Branch during crisis time for RAIUL
- Important now to work out how to get members active, raise Branch visibility, gain a stronger voice.
- Juggling interaction with UCU, RAIUL, on various levels, Outgoing Chair had to resign due to burden of work affecting her health; new Committee cannot face similarly onerous workload. RAIUL must recognise this or the Branch will become unsustainable.
- Committee members need to put in writing to line managers what Branch Committee work entails.

- Branch work needs to be incorporated into the workload model
- This can be discussed at JNCC meeting on Thursday 20 May: attended by Chair (Sue Pell) and (on this one occasion) Committee member (Martin Brown.).
- Permanent second Branch JNCC member to be established later.

7. **Motion:**

“The Branch Committee proposes an annual subscription of £12 for all UCU Branch members, regardless of salary”

Concern from a(n anonymous) member of adjunct faculty re expense, plus repercussions if unable/ unwilling to contribute this sum.

Comments:

Tax can be claimed back on UCU membership

Funds are needed for some expenses to be met by the Branch.

- Handbook on employment law needed: £50.
- RIASA office to attend London meeting
- Training and travel costs

A very small contribution possible from UCU to Branch

BJ: This is defined as a ‘local subscription’: not unusual for a Branch to request this.

Annual cycle to review: 1 September start each year.

UCU subscription sub = progressive, according to salary.

Local subscription could also be done this way.

Different branches have different rates and systems.

UCU membership records are very sketchy in terms of contractual status; subscription rate data is dependable; any *local subscription* differentiation would have to relate to UCU salary rates.

A higher sub had initially been proposed.

We don’t want to dissuade Adjuncts from joining.

Time needed to discuss/modify this proposal: to be done before September.

- Proposal to remit MOTION**
- Agreed

8. **Campaigns 2021-2022:**

Workplace Stress Survey and Campaign

Very stressful year due to RAIUL and Covid crises and greater workload; a need to find out the level of stress experienced across all faculty; workplace stress affects health and well-being.

The data will be used to advocate improvements and to inform FPPW³.

Survey launched today, 17 May 2021. Takes c.15 mins to complete.

Results will be collated and followed up by focus groups.

³ Faculty Progression and Promotion Working group

Please raise this at School meetings and communicate to colleagues so ALL faculty do this. (Also improves visibility of UCU Branch and illustrates what it does). This will also help Work and Progress Committee.

The Branch represents all faculty at RAIUL. Needs to advocate for fairer workloads. However distributed, all work done needs to be reasonable.

As many responses as possible are needed.

Survey has open-ended questions to try and collect detail, incl. effects of working conditions under Covid.

Recruitment Drive: Adjunct Faculty and RIASA

Identify who is(n't) a member; many more of this group needed.

Many Adjuncts currently unemployed by RAIUL. Typically, however, they make up c.60% of teaching staff. Reduced number of Adjuncts contributes to more work for full-time faculty.

Fair and transparent terms needed..

Recruitment may be easier when more adjuncts are back at work in Sept.

CD happy to contact adjuncts personally.

Active input of ideas from Adjuncts and RIASA is essential– the only way the Branch can be effectively responsive to their needs and be the voice of all faculty.

9. Support for Richmond Branch officers

(covered above)

10. Support for other UCU Branches

(details here: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/your-support-is-needed>)

Industrial action taking place by those working in prisons, and at the Univ of Leicester - which is targeting UCU members and threatening their livelihoods

BJ: Strike action itself only ever happens at a university after a ballot of UCU members at that university.

Messages of support, motions from Branches can help other Branches.

MOTION: That the Branch encourages its members to support the UCU academic boycott of the Univ of Leicester.

PASSED

11. Workload and Progression Committee Discussion

NF as Chair, FPPW: Branch should ask for clarity on the role of Research at RAIUL.

Service is recognised on various levels

Many thanks to those who have provided feedback to UCU Branch request for comments.

UCU has an official list of 11 points related to workload

Contact NF (FPPW) as well as SB (UCU).
Pressure needs to come from different points in order to effect change: Branch, Senate, FPPW, HoDs, HR.

12. Setting Branch Priorities and Campaigns 2021-2022

(See above)

New Strategic Plan at new campus: no agenda for Green Issues: one was submitted – but no response.

However, students are looking for this when choosing universities. This fact has been confirmed by Head of MRA.

Green Agenda has been re-submitted – hopefully may be passed this time.
New Green Officer will help.

Current SMT is very supportive of the UCU; things are tight financially.

Any campaign needs to show it is financially helpful to RAIUL.

H&S Officer:

Covid not under control; faculty is back on campus from September.

When back, we need to be working in a safe environment.

More clarity needed on Testing

All faculty vaccinated by then? But new variants...

Summer School: already face to face. Other unis declaring all students have to be vaccinated before returning to campus.

RIASA faculty teaching F2F now.

Branch will bring this up with JNCC on Thursday.

Communication is a learning process for both sides; it can become clearer, faster.

13. Report from Branch Committee Officers

JNCC on Thursday: Agenda to look at workload, equity, facilities, compulsory training, remote/flexible working. MB joining Chair on this occasion. Branch committee will decide who will become the permanent second member.

JNCC also meets in September.

President's Meeting with LGBTQ+ takes place today – one of several meetings initiated by President to gauge the response of various groups to RAIUL policies and conditions.

14. AOB

Risk assessments 'have been done' but have not been shared.

Sage members wouldn't go inside a pub... we have to enter classrooms.

However: Assessments have been carried out and results shown to HR committee

15. Date of next Meeting: Orientation week: Thursday 2 Sept. 10-11.

The Meeting ended at 12.05