

Minutes

**Richmond University's Branch Annual General Meeting, 26 May 2020, 11.00 am
Held through Zoom.**

1. Approval of the minutes of last meeting

It was noted that there was a discussion in the previous meeting about combining the roles of the Executive members, but it was reminded that there was no need to change the Constitution as this can be done in practice.

Motion to Approve the minutes with the Amendment:

1) Replace phrase 'President' when it was used instead of 'Chair'

PASSED unanimously

2. Returning Officer announces result of elections of Branch's Executive

Executive Committee announced as:

Chair - Eunice Goes

Treasure - Rafal Soborski

Secretary - Sue Pell

Membership Officer

Equality Officer - Shuna Neilson

Staff Officer - no nomination

Adjunct Faculty Officer - Nina Reece

It was noted that all the positions were elected unopposed.

Motion to appoint Ivan Cohen as Membership Officer

PASSED unanimously

3. Motion to add a new rule to the Branch's Constitution

Motion reads:

"Proposal to Add New Clause to Membership Rules in Constitution

Proposed Clause 4.4 Members are not authorised to divulge or discuss with individuals or bodies outside Richmond University's branch the nature and content of discussions held at branch meetings unless explicitly authorised by the executive ."

Amendment:

Add: at the end of the proposal "written permission" and " by at least three, including the Chair"

Amendment:

"All discussions and dealings are confidential" to be added at the beginning of the clause.

Discussion about the Motion included:

- outlining the need for confidentiality within the Union
- discussing that negotiations of the Branch are a different matter than discussions, and that they need explicit permission
- raising concerns about culture of privacy and non-communication at Richmond
- raising concerns about managers being part of meetings, and what level of management could be a part of meetings
- it was pointed out that it is convention that management can get support from the Union, but that they do not attend Branch meetings.
- it was also pointed out that issues of Conflict of Interests are discussed in the Rep's Handbook, and need not be an issue resolved at the Branch level.

Motion as amended to add new clause to Membership Rules in Constitution:

"4.4 All discussions and dealings of the Branch are confidential. Members are not authorised to divulge or discuss with individuals or bodies outside Richmond University's Branch the nature and content of discussions held at Branch meetings unless written permission is received by at least three members of the Executive, including the Chair."

PASSED unanimously

4. Motion to make the Richmond's Employee Reps official positions on the Committee

Motion proposed that:

"Employee Rep(s) be an official position within the UCU Executive, to be reviewed at the next AGM"

Discussion on the motion:

- it was raised that the Reps could be combined with Staff Officer
- it was discussed that Employee Reps are in an awkward position, as the role was created for a redundancy period that didn't actually start, and were then kept on to deal with the furlough process and the continued potential of redundancies. It was noted that it is not an official position, and that being recognized by the Union could change the position of the Employee Reps in relation to the university. It was pointed out that the Reps are currently more vehicles of communication for Senior Management to pass information onto Staff and Faculty.
- it was pointed out that UCU members had voted for Martin and Richard
- It was suggested that we need to go back to the University to ask for clarification about the Employee Rep position
- It was also noted that this was an opportunity to formalize the Employee Rep position.
- it was raised that Employee Reps are critical as the HE sector is under a lot of pressure and this positions may be needed in the future

Motion as amended:

"Employee Rep(s) should be co-opted to be on the Executive for the upcoming year, with the role to be reviewed at next year's AGM"

PASSED unanimously

5. Submission of application for UCU recognition

It was noted by the Chair that an application for Branch recognition will be submitted to the UCU when the minutes from this meeting are complete.

It is hoped that the Branch will be recognized by the end of the summer. It was noted that it was a decision to be made by the National UCU Executive.

It was raised that we need a list of UCU members at Richmond.

Action Item

The Chair will ask Barry for a UCU membership list.

The Chair will also ask for the process to be expedited, as it was a pressing matter to have Branch recognition.

6. Health and Safety issues in remote teaching; rights over remote teaching materials

It was noted that the issue of Health and Safety issues in remote teaching had been raised in the recent CASS meeting, and that Employee Reps have also raised it with HR.

A union member contacted HR on behalf of CASS about the support of Health and Safety in light of continued expectations to work from home. HR said it was looking into it, but was currently focused on Covid-19 and will look at this in the future.

7. Furlough of Full-time and Adjunct Staff

It was noted that Employee Reps have asked for a list from Schools about who has been furloughed, for how long, how rotation of furlough might work, who is organizing this, etc, but this has not been received.

It was noted that there is no information about what is happening with Adjunct Staff, some of whom are effectively full-timers at Richmond. It was noted that some Adjuncts have been furloughed.

It was suggested that Management should do a survey to see how the Faculty and Staff think they are dealing with furloughing.

It was pointed out that the furlough process has not been handled well within CASS.

It was agreed that it should be a priority of the Branch to find out information about and to support Adjunct Faculty who are furloughed.

8. Branch Communication

It was discussed that the Branch consider how we would organize communication with the Members and how to store documents. It was noted too that this was an issue that would be discussed at an upcoming Executive meeting.

Action Item

Create a Branch communication system and strategy, which will be coordinated by the Secretary.

9. Recommendation of Executive to join UCU Activist List

It was recommended that members of the Executive join the UCU Activist List in order to keep up with current issues and campaigns.

10. Anonymous participant in Virtual Meetings

It was noted that there was a person who remained anonymous during the previous Branch meeting. It was noted that people's identities are required for these virtual meetings.