

Branch Meeting Minutes

15 January 2021

10.00-11.30 via Teams

1. Approval of Minutes 3.7.20

Approved.

2. Matters arising

None

3. Draft Recognition Agreement

- a. Achieved with the help of Barry Jones, UCU Regional Officer. Many thanks to him for his invaluable, extensive support in achieving this.
- b. It contains the standard terms, similar to those at other universities
- c. It only covers faculty at the moment, as SMT says many admin staff are not UCU members.
- d. The Agreement will be in place for one year, then reviewed. We then aim to include staff at RAIUL. Recruitment of non-faculty members is essential for this.
- e. Agreement is almost finalised, barring minor adjustments requested by SMT.
- f. It allows the Branch, or Bargaining Unit (BU) to be consulted on all matters related to employment conditions and to negotiate with SMT on matters such as pay, working hours, annual leave, sick leave.
- g. RAIUL will provide the recognised Branch with resources (see below).
- h. All RAIUL UCU members who responded to the *surveymonkey* request to accept or refuse this Recognition Agreement have voted to accept.
- i. The Recognition Agreement will be passed to University Board for approval. Once this is achieved, the Branch will be recognised officially.
- j. SMT has stated that UCU committee work will not receive course relief from RAIUL, but it will count towards the service part of the RAIUL contract requirements.

Points to consider:

- I. It is crucial that the Branch should be consulted re terms and conditions on the new workload model
- II. There should be a Union Rep present at the committee looking at workload to ensure useful input re faculty conditions
- III. Employee Reps may be replaced by the BU.
- IV. Consult HR as to when *they* think BU should be consulted on RAIUL affairs
- MOTION** to be circulated to members via email for approval via *surveymonkey*:
 - The Branch requests that a representative of the BU be included as a member of the Workload Committee.

4. Branch information

(See above)

5. Reports from Branch Officers

- a. **UCU Branch facilities and resources** - once the Branch is recognised (SP)
 - i. Email account to help organise members
 - ii. Physical location at RAIUL
 - iii. Noticeboard
 - iv. Space on the RAIUL website, stating what Branch does and contact details
 - v. Information to be received re new employees
 - vi. Branch officer time taken into account as part of Service obligation.
- b. **Branch Membership** (IC)
 - i. We now have access to the UCU database of members, which does not entirely match the original Branch list
 - ii. IC will contact departed members to ask if they wish to retain RAIUL membership
 - iii. 32 on Branch gmail list who say they are UCU members
- c. **Branch Finances** (RS)
 - i. Branch account to be held at Unit Trust Bank, which hold accounts for the not-for-profit sector. Help received from UCU in setting this up.
 - ii. Policy of UCU is that all payments require 2 signatures. This will be Chair and Treasurer.
 - iii. Funding from UCU Head Office: starts at 75p per member per year but can be higher.

- iv. A small voluntary contribution to be requested from Branch members in the future for training, travel, etc. £20 has been proposed. To be determined at the AGM.
- v. We cannot accumulate reserves so aim for a small amount for the daily running of the Branch.

d. **Equality (SN)**

RAIUL Academic Regulations, point 27: *Equality* states that “The policy of the University is that students, applicants or employment candidates are considered without regard to race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, or age. The University complies with the UK Equality Act (2010)” (2018, p.5).

Policies: <https://3d50fu3mup51tmdxz3zef8dq-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/UNIVERSITY-ACADEMIC-REGULATIONS-18-19.pdf>).

This wording is reflected in the *Student Code of Conduct* (2020-21, pp.8-9).

- i. LGBT+: ‘sexual orientation’ was not formerly included in that RAIUL list – I pointed out the omission in a previous incarnation of Academic Board, and this was rectified. In practice, I have not experienced or heard of any LGBT+ discrimination at RAIUL, but -
 - Please do let us know if problems occur.
- ii. Disability: I have often seen RAIUL being very caring on a personal level in helping individuals to overcome physical obstacles, despite the difficulty of an old, listed building. Hopefully the new premises will be more disabled-friendly. Mental health problems are, inevitably, less visible.
 - Please let us know of any issues that the Branch could help with.
- iii. Gender Equality: The *2018 Gender Pay Gap Report*, written by the VP and Chief Operating Officer, stated that the median gender pay gap for RAIUL (with 47% male and 53% female employees) was 17.1%. He says this “compares favourably with that of other organisations within the [UK] higher education sector.” He goes on to say that: “We are committed to continuing to work towards reducing the gap through communication with Schools and Departments during recruitment and promotion of employees, and through longer term initiatives such as a salary framework, clear promotion criteria, and evidence based gender monitoring. We will continue to seek to identify any barriers to gender equality.” He also says that RAIUL “is committed to reporting its gender pay gap data on an annual basis” (Wheeler, R., 2019, p.4). RAIUL webpage: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/gender-pay-gap-report/>
 - I will ask where we can find the more recent reports.
 - Please let us know of evidence of lack of parity

- iv. Racial equality and decolonising the curriculum: we have regrettably lost our UCU Adjunct Rep, Nina Reece, who had campaigned at Goldsmiths for greater racial equality. She was helpful in the School of Liberal Arts in pointing out that we needed to improve the representation of authors of colour when selecting texts for teaching. There are no doubt many other areas that need improvement.
 - Let us know where the Branch's help is needed.
- v. Adjuncts: Nina Reece's departure is an example of the disadvantage suffered by adjuncts at RAIUL, as the University struggles to survive by prioritising full-time faculty. We made a Branch request to HR last year for adjuncts to be furloughed in Fall 2020, but they said this could not be done due to government furlough regulations. Some Adjuncts have been retained in areas of the University which would otherwise not function, though often with very limited hours.
 - We need more Adjuncts to join the Branch, and we need an Adjunct Rep
- vi. Covid-19: Equality issues and concerns: there is a helpful document published by the UCU re overcoming potential *additional* disadvantages for women, anyone of colour, disabled, or LGBT+ (*see UCU website*). UCU members should also have received an email from the UCU on 14 Jan re 'critical worker status' for HE education employees and what that entails.

Overall: Please let us know of any evidence of inequality in these areas and what you think we should focus on as a UCU Branch:

- Workload affected by childcare/home-schooling
- Adjuncts on zero-hour contracts are in a more vulnerable position than full-time faculty and may be worried about volunteering to represent others as part of the UCU. An Adjunct Rep is crucial.

e. Employee Rep Report (MW):

- i. Course Evaluations continue to be used as the basis for promotion and pay rises: this highly problematic, as the sample feedback is often small, and research demonstrates that they are discriminatory, especially in terms of gender and ethnicity.
- ii. Redundancies: unclear how many have been made redundant and within what period. Over 20 redundancies within a year needs a transparent, official redundancy process. If further redundancies to be made, as stated in this week's Town Hall Meeting: how many?
- iii. Greater transparency is needed, especially as re-accreditation by MSCHE is due this year - though may be delayed). Lack of clarity in minutes/communication previously caused problems with this accreditation.

6. Setting Branch Priorities and Campaigns

What are the areas the Branch should prioritise?

- a. Job cuts and workload
- b. Adjunct officer
- c. RIASA officer
- d. Green Rep needed to confront the greatest threat the world faces; input on new campus will be key
- e. Greater engagement of membership needed – to greater effectiveness of BU. How to increase membership and engagement. Recognition of Branch will be key. 2/3 Union dues can be claimed back in tax reductions: to be highlighted.
- f. Potential face-to-face teaching in March: safety of all faculty, staff, students is key.
- g. Promotion and transparency of promotion: equity of advancement
- h. Summer teaching: justification is problematic, normally c.£6000 for two courses: in Summer 2021, two courses taught without payment.

7. Date of next meeting

- March: date TBD after official recognition of the Branch.

8. AOB

None

The Meeting ended at 11.45