

BRANCH MEETING

Minutes

13 January 2022

10.00-12.00 via Teams

1. Approval of Minutes 9 September 2021

Approved.

2. Matters arising

- On-going covid precautions at RAIUL still needed.
- UCU Branch spreadsheet monitoring action points and completion is useful: most points are being addressed.
- UCU Branch has been consulted by RAIUL on various points and has supplied input which has been acted upon, eg wording of new Equality survey.
- Digital data ownership policy is an issue that still needs to be raised

3. Welcome new executive committee members and thank outgoing officer Dominic Alessio and Wayne Clark (SP)

Many thanks from the Branch to Dom and Wayne for all the work they have carried out until recently.

Chair and committee welcome Emmanuel Okyere as treasurer and Kandida Purnell as H & S officer. Discuss the open position of Green Officer.

3.1 Officer ratification

The Branch Committee moves the ratification of Branch Committee members to the vacant offices of Treasurer and Health and Safety Officer.

Section 8.12 of the RAIUL UCU Constitution states: "If an office is vacant and no ballot is being held for that office, the committee is empowered to fill the vacancy, either from members of the committee itself or from the general membership of the Branch. Officers so appointed will retire at the same time as if they had been duly declared elected at the last Annual General Meeting."

BE it resolved that:

- ❖ Emmanuel Okyere be appointed to the vacant office of Treasurer.
- ❖ Kandida Purnell by appointed to the vacant office of Health and Safety Officer.

MOTION:

- ❖ Approved unanimously

4. Reports (Agenda item 1) update about the October JNCC Meetings (SP/CD/SB)

Not all issues are addressed during the JNCC. There are separate meetings for some urgent and ongoing issues, like Covid and face to face teaching and Stress survey results.

Issues addressed were:

- a. Gender pay gap report;
- b. Budget update received;
- c. Union space needed on new campus
- d. Adjunct faculty contracts: letter sent from Branch (September 2021) to demand job security for long-term adjuncts via move to permanent contracts; SMT gave positive response but problem of finances given as reason for not implementing this now; response and timeline for action awaited from SMT to UCU Branch letter.

Adjunct contract group: CD, SP +others. On-going campaign for RAIUL to act by Sept '22. Zero-hour contracts need to remain at forefront of UCU Branch action taken this semester to resolve this problem. Example of ongoing hardship: M Woodfield has been teaching 6-7 courses/year for 25 years on zero contract and no furlough.

Next JNCC meeting: issue to be raised:

- a. **Adjunct faculty contracts**
- b. **Pay increases tied to cost of living**, ideally back-paid to reflect loss of income over the years: timeline for implementation required.
- c. **Timeline for RAIUL pay** to be raised to the level of other institutions
- d. **Pension contributions to USS**: clarity needed from RAIUL. How will this work, how much absorbed by RAIUL and how much a burden on faculty?
- e. **Budgeting transparency** needed prior to JNCC meetings in order to properly address it

Other issues the Executive will continue to monitor are:

- Stress and workload** as an on-going issue
- FPPW**: effectiveness of this to be assessed

5. Reports (Agenda item 2) update about union facilities time (SP)

Executive officers to have time allocated to pursue union work: adequate time needed to represent faculty and to avoid burnout. Points have been allocated. Executive officers now have the right to take committee relief (77 points each), which must be used during the elected term; there was a one course relief given to the Chair and Secretary in addition to committee relief for their hugely time-consuming positions, who are required to dedicate c.7hrs/week (250 points).

However, the course relief has been described as a 'relocation of work' and has the potential to be changed at the HoDs and Provost's discretion.

UFT must be a university budget line item so that no departments are disadvantaged and it needs to be secured time-off, e.g. the above course relief and committee relief needs to be established as an on-going right.

Adjunct faculty are to be paid for officer position.

As more people move from adjunct zero hours to a permanent contract more permanent faculty will be available to fill the committee positions vacated by UCU Branch executives.

FPPW Workload model should help with workload distribution, though the model will need to be assessed and modified as it is implemented in order to avoid the imposition of increasingly unmanageable obligations.

NB: Adjuncts are currently not part of FPPW or part of appraisal and are thus excluded from potential benefits.

- ⇒ Union should survey faculty to ensure FPPW works as effectively as possible on all levels.
- ⇒ Union should supply help and advice to faculty in completing workload forms where needed

6. Reports (Agenda item 3) update about International and home working (SB/MB)

RAIUL International Remote Working Form needs to be completed if a faculty member is working longer than 30 days in a year outside the UK: faculty need to apply to spend that time outside the UK; RAIUL says this is not intended to restrict faculty but to ensure contractual tax obligations are met. The form needs to go through Finance.

This policy appears to contradict the mission statement of the university and to complicate the position of faculty working abroad, including that of the Provost. The UK government requires an application only after 90 days. Is this 30 days' requirement related to CEG Chinese requirements?

- Clarity is required on the fiscal/legal basis of this requirement, which appears to restrict the effectiveness and career path of faculty.
- What is the advice of HMRC to RAIUL vs that of the company currently advising RAIUL on this issue?
- How many members of faculty does this affect?

ACTION: Poll members

7. Motions

7.1 Zero-hour Contract Teach-in

The Executive indicated a willingness to address Adjunct Faculty's exploitative working conditions, committing to setting up an Adjunct Faculty Working Group and looking to move away from use of zero-hour contracts. However, no action has followed these commitments made in meetings. To pressure the Executive action to eliminate use of zero-hour contracts at Richmond and to build understanding and solidarity with UCU members' strike actions (see the Four Fights that includes casualization), the Branch Committee proposes that a 'teach-in' in the Spring term focused on zero-hour contracts in the HE sector and at Richmond:

- a. Planned for 14- 16 March: In-person and online speakers, table outside the university main building.
- b. 20 Jan Adjunct Faculty Meeting

Be it resolved that:

- ❖ The UCU Branch supports and encourages the Adjunct Action Group to organise and hold a 'teach-in' concerning use of zero-hour contracts and casualization of employees in the HE sector and at Richmond.

MOTION:

- ❖ Approved unanimously

7.2 Letter to the Executive concerning pay

Richmond faculty have not had a pay increase since the 1% cost of living increase awarded on January 1st 2018 despite the rising costs of living and inflation. We acknowledge the fragile financial state of the University and as such, ask that a pay increase is effective from September 2022 (in line with reductions in the deficit) and that the increment is phased over two years.

Be it resolved that:

- ❖ The Branch Committee will send a letter to the University Executive demanding a pay increase for all faculty in line with increases in cost of living, with a formula and timeline provided for implementation.

MOTION:

- ❖ Approved unanimously

8. AOB

- a. What procedures are in place for permanent faculty when classes are cancelled due to low recruitment? Cancellation of classes also has hugely adverse effect on adjunct faculty.

- b. Green officer required: potential officer identified and to be sent details of the post
- c. UCU Branch Economics specialist to forward useful information to Branch members re USS consultation

Date of next Meeting: AGM in May, date TBD.

The Meeting ended at 11.45