

Annual General Meeting 5 May 2023

Meeting began 10:05

Attendees: Sue Pell (Chair), Sam Bracey (Secretary; Minutes), Emmanuel Okyere (Treasurer), Martin Brown (Staff Officer), Catherine Dille (Green Officer), Piola Massarotto (Adjunct Officer), Barry Jones (UCU Regional until 11:21), Kandida Purnell (Health and Safety Officer from 11am)

Members: [redacted]

Minutes

Meeting was opened with a welcome from the Chair. The Chair briefly outlined recent meetings organised by the Branch including the open meetings and last branch meeting in January. Chair stated that she wanted to amend the agenda to include two motions concerning Branch expenditure which would be inserted at point 5 (the first is to include a limit to donations in the constitution, and the second permission to draw down funds for a Branch Executive training day).

1. Approval of minutes 27 January 2023 meeting

Minutes were approved and seconded. There were no matters arising

2. Ratification of Elected Branch Committee Officers

Chair: SUE PELL

Secretary: SAM BRACEY

Treasurer: EMMANUEL OKYERE

Membership Secretary: SHUNA NEILSON

Equality Officer: LUCIA MORAWSKA

Staff Officer: ANITA AMIES

RIASA Officer: Vacant

Adjunct Officer: Vacant

Health and Safety Officer: MARTIN BROWN

Green Officer: CATHERINE DILLE

Chair announced nominations were opened in April and the election was uncontested for all roles. As part of the nomination process everyone put a statement together as to why they wished to serve and that these statements were available on the Branch website. Chair prioritised building the union, pay and contracts have impacted desire to prioritise mobilising

around key issues (pay, ending casualization at Richmond). All Committee members present introduced themselves and reaffirmed their values and goals for Richmond UCU campaigns.

The formal ratification of Officers was seconded and approved unanimously.

3. Call for nominations for vacant Adjunct and RIASA Officers

Piola Massarotto put herself forward as Adjunct Officer and set out her position and aims for this role. Piola has been active in the role and would like to carry on. Piola noted that it was a crucial time for adjuncts with the introduction of new contracts.

The nomination was seconded by SB and SP and approved. Nominations will remain open until the end of the meeting

There were no nominations for RIASA officer role which will remain vacant. It was noted that three of the Executive Committee are from RIASA so the Leeds Campus will be adequately represented in the year ahead.

4. Thanks to out-going Branch Officers

The Chair noted two Officers are leaving their roles on the Executive this year. Ivan Cohen has been Membership Officer since the union was recognised. The Chair noted Ivan has been a great servant for the University and the Union, and recorded our thanks for his expertise and his important contributions during his time both as Branch Officer and within the University for example as Faculty Senate for many years. The Chair also noted Kandida Purnell who has been H and S Officer 2022-2023 is leaving to go on maternity leave. The Chair thanked Kandida for her contributions and efforts noting in particular Kandida's active involvement in communications for the Branch and contributions over the year. Thanks were also extended to all the Officers for their effort and contributions, and especially those who are moving roles, for all their work for the union.

5. Motion 1: Maximum donation to other organisation £100

Chair put forward a motion to amend point 6.34 in the constitution. Currently no specific amount is included for donations to be approved by the Branch membership. The Chair moved to update the constitution to set a limit of £100 for donations to external bodies to be agreed by Committee, so that in future any amount greater than £100 will require Branch approval.

In the discussion of the motion a question was raised regarding whether insertion of a clause was necessary regarding use of funds. It was queried if amounts were less than £100 whether it was appropriate that funds can be spent without Branch members approval. Another member suggested such a clause was not necessary as any and all spending is accountable.

The UCU Regional Officer noted that all expenditure has an in-built safe guard as it is decided by committee. The only implication is how would any such decisions be reported to members (this could be via publication of minutes or other method). Another member asked if any funds had been used for donations (or any other expenses). It was noted that in two years no monies have been spent.

The motion was moved, seconded and approved unanimously.

Motion 2: Permission to release funds for Exec training day up to £400

Chair explained the reason for the motion to have permission to use Branch funds was to cover expenses for a face-to face training day for all the executive committee officers. The expenses proposed to a maximum of £400 would largely be used to pay travel expenses for Leeds officers. Since the establishment of the Branch the meetings have all been online and a training day would allow the Officers based in London and Leeds to come together in person for the first time.

The Green Officer noted agreement for this really important, event as in three years never we have not met. Secretary seconded this with a caveat that perhaps it should not be an annual event as the costs of travel were high.

The Chair moved the motion to be able to spend funds up to £400 for a training day (training to orient new officers, team-building, etc.), the motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

6. Campaigns and Reports 2022-2023:

- Adjunct Contracts

Chair asked the Adjunct officer to report on progress of adjunct contract negotiations. The Adjunct Officer noted there was a meeting last week with the University Executive Team (UET) which was reasonably positive. Following on from this meeting at the beginning of June a longer working group will be held to go through the role profiles and other associated documentation with HR. New contracts should be offered in time for Fall. Hope is that contracts will be in place for September. We think the adjuncts offered guaranteed courses will be teaching lower division high class numbers general ed courses and core courses (no details yet).

Please see full report on discussion concerning adjunct contracts at the end of minutes.

- Pay Claim

Chair reported the negotiating team for the pay claim comprises; Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Regional Officer. We had an agreement after last year to meet earlier. This year we met in January (UET position) and February (our pay claim, meaningful multi-year deal to get us parity with HE Sector). Then the next meeting was the UET pay offer- we do not believe this is an offer. We conducted a survey and presented initial findings to UET, highlighted loss of

goodwill to university and that everyone think pay is inadequate. We held an open pay meeting which was well attended, and the findings from the survey were replicated in the discussion. The next meeting was due today, but UET have no substantive new issues to raise so meeting postponed. Next meeting in June.

Chair noted that we are a unionised workforce and poor pay is making Richmond a labour-busting institution. Regional UCU make insist we ballot for industrial action. There was discussion concerning the need to ballot on industrial action.

Motion was proposed to ballot members on their willingness to ballot on industrial action. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

ACTION: We will continue to communicate with members about pay. We will prepare a ballot and share with members.

It was noted there are other options to consider such as approaching the trustees and raising a vote of no confidence in UET.

- Working Conditions

Chair reported that the Branch conducted a survey concerning working conditions in Chiswick. Concerns included: difficulties meeting with students, a feeling of disconnect with University, lack of space, concerns over PG students coming in and loss of private space. We shared the initial findings with HR and made recommendations for designated spaces for work, social, eating, employee only etc. and a better room booking facility.

We acknowledge the need to maximise operational space but not to detriment of functionality of staff and faculty. We also noted member concerns surrounding increasing workloads.

It was noted that lack of natural light is affecting many of us, especially those who work in the library. Possibility of enclosing some spaces create for people to work quietly in. Lighting is not adjustable in faculty space but is elsewhere. No space to meet advisees. We shared that many management offices will become bookable spaces. It was suggested that moving forward our strategy should include students as they are also affected by lack of space to meet with advisors and for office hours.

ACTION: Share findings, devise strategy to move forward on improving working conditions

- Building the Branch

It was reported that recruitment and organising should be at the heart of what we do, we have tried to ensure that communication is effective and we plan to have more open meetings. We want to push for an on campus event in the Fall. One around the payclaim to

arrange to do something at the end of October as we work currently for free for 2 months of the year due to low pay and inflation.

ACTION: Plan an event

Motion: Chair asked for the ratification of Piola as Adjunct Officer to be noted in the minutes this was seconded by Martin and Catherine. The Chair officially welcomed the Adjunct Officer.

Member raised issue of new 4 credit courses. Breach of contract as more than credits contracted to teach. Legality of it is uncertain. Compensation in workload points is inadequate. Chair acknowledges this issue and we need to push on this.

7. Support for other UCU Branches

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

8. Workload and Progression Committee Discussion

9. Setting Branch Priorities and Campaigns 2023-2024

ACTION: solicit members on what their key issues are.

Pay, adjunct contracts, equality of pay, 4 credit courses, green issues, working conditions, progression.

10. AOB

None

Chair closes meeting at 12:09

Reports

Adjunct Contracts

Work on the Adjunct Contracts, including guaranteed courses contract has now progressed to the final stages with the expectation that new contracts will be ready to sent out ready for the guaranteed courses contracts to begin in Fall. There are still some issues around roles and responsibilities (which we aim to work on in the working group meeting in June), but the Branch's primary focus is on approving contracts so they can be shared as soon as possible with our Adjunct colleagues. It was noted contract negotiations are moving in the right direction, the new contracts will be an improvement but more needs to be done.

The Chair reiterated the statement of the Adjunct officer, stating the campaign to end casualization at Richmond and subsequent contract negotiations had been ongoing for over a year, with the Branch priority being security in the contracts for adjunct faculty and to ensure adjuncts are protected. The next priority will be to move forward on working conditions for adjuncts through the work on role profiles. The Adjunct Officer noted concern over the lack of recognition of the work and commitment to the University of adjunct colleagues, by the UET

and the hope that via the role profile work and through garnering adjuncts' views we will make progress.

A member asked for an explanation of guaranteed course contract. It was clarified that these contracts would be offered to Adjuncts of 4 years service or more for courses UET expected to run every year. The expectation is that these would be lower division courses with multiple sections, and core degree courses. If the course does not run, an alternative course or duties would be offered, and if it was known the course would be discontinued redundancy process would start. This does not happen currently.

A member asked were questions about the set fee for courses and distinguishing duties part of the discussion with UET, as at other institutions fees were paid for teaching, marking etc. It was noted that negotiators are still teasing through these aspects, as the model used at Richmond is unique in the sector. Adjuncts are paid for 113 hours extra for teaching, teaching preparation, training, moderation, marking. We have asked for a breakdown of the 113 hours. We may need Adjuncts to log their time to have an idea of what adjuncts actually do.

It was noted in the discussion that HoDs should not be asking adjuncts to do more than teach, course prepping, grading, meeting students. We should be canvassing Adjuncts to see if departments are treating adjuncts differently. Has to be respect for adjuncts' work.

Research and workload-related Question

A query was raised regarding the distinction between research and research-led teaching in terms of Adjunct duties. The University does not include research as part of the adjunct role as adjuncts are just paid for teaching. However, Adjuncts are research-active and do more than just teaching. UET do not want to recognise Adjunct research as part of the role because they would have to pay for it. It was noted this does not only impact Adjunct faculty but full-time faculty as the roles are predicated on the current flawed workload model of a 35 hour working week (1200 points) comprising 60% teaching, 20% service and 20% RPE (research and professional engagement). Workload points for RPE are capped at 240, no cap exists for teaching or service.

It was raised that accreditation requires research. Accreditation being valued at 25 million to the University. Currently the university has research as a condition for progression but also caps and does not value research; if research is needed for progression UET have to support research.