

Welcome, RAIUL UCU Members!

We extend a warm greeting to all members of the RAIUL UCU. We begin by acknowledging a significant transition within our Executive Committee. In January, our long-serving Chair, Sue Pell, made the decision to step down. Sue has been an integral part of our UCU branch from its inception, serving as a founding member. Her dedication and leadership over the years have played a crucial role in shaping the Richmond UCU, overseeing pivotal campaigns such as ending casualised employment, addressing stress concerns, and navigating essential contract negotiations and pay talks. We express our sincere thanks and gratitude to Sue for her unwavering commitment and invaluable service to our community.

In the interim, Secretary Sam Bracey has taken on the role of Chair until the upcoming Branch elections in May. Additionally, UCU Officers Catherine Dille and Lucia Morawska will be sharing Secretary duties until the election process is completed. We are fortunate to have their experience and dedication steering us through this transitional period.

We are pleased to announce the addition of Molly Bettie to our team as the RIASA Officer, filling a vacant position and bolstering our ranks. Molly's expertise and enthusiasm will undoubtedly contribute to our ongoing efforts.

Looking ahead, this year will bring renewed discussions as pay talks resume, and we face crucial consultations regarding the University Rewards Project. Your support as members is vital during these times, and we encourage you to actively participate in shaping the direction of our collective journey. Your presence and engagement are integral to our collective strength and success- thank you for your continuous support! As a community, we look forward to fostering collaboration, supporting one another, and working together to achieve our shared goals in the new year!

We all got a (minimum) £1000 uplift in January!

Every eligible employee received at least a 2% salary increase in January 2024. As a result of successful negotiations, we managed to secure a commitment from UET to ensure that all individuals would see a minimum £1000 rise in their salaries. This translates to those in the lower salary bands receiving a percentage increase higher than 2%.

In the course of negotiations last year, UCU had to assertively address the need to rectify pay disparities arising from the implementation of the previous year's salary increase. Advocating on behalf of our members, we confronted the inequality stemming from the fact that faculty members who were promoted or progressed in the 2022-23 period did not receive the uplift from the previous year.

At Richmond, UCU has prioritised addressing pay concerns, and our commitment extends to ensuring that meaningful pay reparations continue to be a focal point. Members, it is crucial to sustain the momentum in advocating for improved pay as we approach the negotiations for 2024-25. With your ongoing engagement and support, UCU is determined to secure fair pay at Richmond.

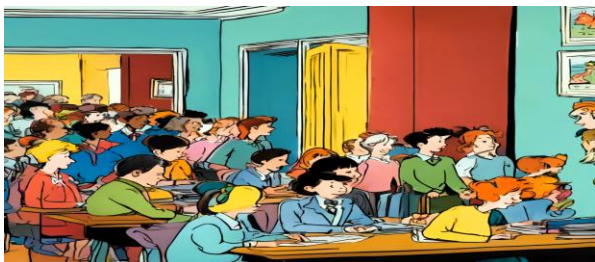
Trick or Treat?: Halloween Action on Pay and Precarity:

On 31 October the Branch organised a Halloween-themed information day across both the Chiswick and Leeds campuses. The aim of the event was to raise awareness of our ongoing campaigns around improved pay and the challenges of precarity faced by our Adjunct Faculty colleagues. Giving out 'treats' aimed at counteracting the 'tricks' faced by the Faculty, we highlighted the disparity in our pay in contrast to comparable Higher Education institutions and informed students and colleagues about the difficulties inherent to the zero-hours contracts in use at Richmond for some of our Adjunct Faculty. As one Faculty member expressed it: *'we are sometimes made to feel like the ghosts of Richmond, who come in to teach but are not recognised as full employees of the University.'* The Branch's work on these campaigns is ongoing, and we welcome the support of members.



Working Space Update

Our Health and Safety Officer, Martin Brown, actively engaged in the working group discussions on Chiswick campus' working space. Valuable feedback on the current layout and upcoming Fall 24 reconfiguration plans has been collected and shared with UET [<https://richmond.web.ucu.org.uk/ucu-working-space-survey/>]. In response, UET has scheduled a crucial Town Hall meeting on February 14th from 13:30-14:30. Here, the University Executive Team will elucidate the proposed changes and address queries. Your presence is vital to ensure your concerns are heard and addressed. Join us in shaping the future of our working environment. Don't miss this opportunity to have your voice heard!



UCU Equalities Conference

Lucia Morawska, our Equalities representative, participated in UCU's Annual Equality Conference held in Manchester from 16 to 18 November 2023. The conference featured a joint gathering for black, disabled, LGBT+, migrant, and women members, alongside dedicated sessions for each constituency, joint sessions, various workshops, and guest speakers.

Lucia attended the Women Members' Conference themed "Lost in Place - Creating Autonomy for Women."

The conference encompassed discussions on various aspects, such as autonomy in taking industrial action, autonomy in performing job responsibilities, embodied autonomy at the workplace, and the intersection of collective autonomy with individual autonomy and connections.

See here for details of the conference: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/membersannualgroupsconference>

Adjunct Faculty Updates

Our dedicated Adjunct Officer, Piola Massarotto, is championing the cause for adjunct colleagues at Richmond. Following a comprehensive survey last year, we've identified prevailing concerns: inequality, limited progression, isolation, and a lack of integration within the university community. The gathered insights will be presented to the Provost and Deputy Provost. We are actively seeking concrete actions to address these pressing issues and ensure a more equitable and supportive environment for our adjunct faculty. Your support is crucial as we work towards positive changes for our adjunct colleagues. Stay tuned for further updates and opportunities to contribute to the conversation.

To keep connected, all Richmond Adjunct Faculty are encouraged to join the Adjunct Whatsapp group. Contact the Adjunct Rep on the branch email.

UCU and the Green Agenda

Richmond Branch's Green Officer, Catherine Dille, has been meeting as part of an informal working group of colleagues and student representatives seeking ways to promote Sustainability at the University; the Branch is pleased to support the work of engaged young people taking a lead on this critical issue at Richmond.

UCU Richmond is also glad to report that in November Chiswick Park switched energy providers and is once again on a fully renewable energy tariff (UK wind/solar/hydro). Members will please keep an eye out for new signage around the waste bins explaining what can be recycled.

[UCU Stress Survey 2023 Report – Unacceptable levels of stress continue](#)

The UCU met with members of the University Executive Team on 15 December to discuss the findings of our 2023 Stress Survey. Following up on the UCU's 2021 survey, we reported that unacceptable levels of stress have continued for faculty and staff at Richmond. The main causes are increased workload and poorly managed changes (ie. last minute deadlines, information requests, etc). See here for the [UCU Stress Survey Preliminary Findings Report 2023](#).

The University has a legal duty to address unacceptable levels of stress. UCU have called on the University to make this a priority. Workloads need to decrease. More faculty are needed to redistribute the load and responsibilities. UCU has argued that unacceptable levels of stress should be solved by moving Adjunct Faculty to permanent contracts, and stopping the use of zero-hour contracts!

We also agreed that we all need to work together to destigmatise mental health. Mental health is a workplace issue. As the [UCU reports](#), "One in four people will experience some kind of mental health condition in the course of a year." While there are a number of factors involved, economic recession, workplace uncertainty, and stress exacerbate the issue. **Don't suffer alone. Report your unacceptable levels of stress. Tell the Union.**

To find out more or to get involved, email the [UCU branch](#). You can also attend the UCU course, [Mental Health is a Trade Union Issue](#), online 10 May.

[Get Involved with your Union!](#)

We are looking for volunteer Caseworkers and Departmental Reps to help build and diversify the voice of the Union. Please [get in touch with us](#) with any news, ideas, or concerns you might have.

[Dates for your calendar!](#)

The next Branch Members' Meeting will be held on
17th May 10.30am - 12.30pm (e-mail

RichmondUCU@richmond.ac.uk for the link if you have not received it)

Together we can improve working conditions at Richmond

[UCU Richmond Branch Committee Officers](#)

Interim Chair - Dr Samantha Bracey
Interim Secretaries – Lucia Morawska and Catherine Dille

Adjunct Faculty Officer - Piola Massarotto
Membership Officer – Shuna Neilson
Equalities Officer - Lucia Morawska
Treasurer - Emmanuel Okyere
Health and Safety Officer – Martin Brown
Green Officer - Catherine Dille
Staff Officer – Vacant
RIASA Officer – Molly Bettie