

UCU/University Negotiating Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Friday 13th May 2022

Present: Nalin Thakkar [**Chair**], Simeon Gill (SG), Nicola Hutchings (NH), David Swanson (DS), Umit Yildiz (UY), Patrick Hackett (PH), Adèle MacKinlay (AMM), Andrew Mullen (AM), Michael Platt (MP) [minutes]

Apologies: Philippa Browning, Molly Geidel, Louise Crompton

1 Minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2021

NT confirmed that there was an accurate record of the minutes and actions taken in the previous meeting.

2 Action log update

NT summarised the actions in the action log and confirmed that all actions from the previous meeting had been completed or formed part of the agenda for the current meeting.

3 Matters Arising

NT asked whether there were any matters arising and confirmed with the group that there were none for this meeting.

4 General update from Director of People and OD (to include P&DR)

AMM updated that lots of time and investment was being put into the development of the P&OD strategy development. Lots of consultation has taken place with colleagues across the University though no specific consultation for Unions has taken place to date and offered this to UCU. The strategy is still in development but would be sent to UCU before publication.

AMM also updated that P&OD transformation had started, with an initial focus on Recruitment. The purpose of the improvements would be to enhance the candidate and manager experience throughout the recruitment process. There are now published dates through to November 2022 regarding delivery dates for P&OD transformation.

AMM stated that additional resources would be dedicated to the P&OD transformation programme, which is currently being led by Tracy Pinner (Head of P&OD Operations).

UCU raised that colleagues have concerns about the transformation of systems and process and said that this should have happened many years ago, and shared concerns about the investment in transformation, both financial and colleague support.

AMM added that, initially, the P&OD transformation programme would begin with delivering quick wins where minimal financial investment and IT support would be required. Financial investment in P&OD transformation would come later as part of the longer-term P&OD transformation.

UCU asked if there would be any formal communication to colleagues regarding the transformation programme.

AMM confirmed that communications and marketing support had been agreed on the P&OD transformation programme and clarified that communications would be developed and cascaded to colleagues as and when required throughout the programme.

PH then noted the recently published REF results and said we should be pleased with the University's performance.

NT congratulated colleagues on their achievements.

UCU then raised concerns around the pay gap at the University specifically the gender pay gap and that of BME colleagues compared to other colleagues at all levels within the University.

NT confirmed how pay and pay progression works at the University and referred to the fact that the pay gap had narrowed slightly but agreed that there were still further improvements to be made.

UCU observed that there was narrow representation at senior leadership levels, particularly within PS.

AMM stated that both she and the Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion recently co-chaired a meeting to try and understand where the blocks were in attracting and recruiting more diverse talent into the University. The group had just been established and work would continue in this area.

PH reinforced comments from AMM and said that nobody had equivocated away problems we have around Diversity and Inclusion at the University. This is being taken seriously and looked at and this can be seen by the creation of the new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Directorate and the appointment of a new Director of EDI which provides more dedicated resource to look at this.

UCU said leadership should share the challenges faced in attracting and recruiting more diverse talent at the University for managers and colleagues to help and support in addressing these barriers.

AMM confirmed the University was currently collecting data as part of exit interviews and this information would then need to be used more systematically and shared with the right people across the organisation.

AMM continued by updating on P&DR activity. Little activity since the previous update had been provided. Feedback has been received from colleagues about P&DR's, however, this was more around process and less so around culture. The feedback received is useful but will not help in addressing some of the cultural matters relating to supporting colleagues' performance.

UCU pointed out that paperwork had been updated in February 2020 relating to colleagues P&DR's but happened without Union consultation and this made it difficult for Unions to support colleagues with P&DR's.

5 Research and Teaching expectations (UCU)

UCU raised concerns that there are other measures in place to review performance that sit outside the P&DR but that do not need to sit outside the P&DR process, and that this is unreasonable. UCU stated these other measurements cannot be used in performance or capability conversations and they were concerned that the University was not supporting colleagues with the additional pressure this was causing.

AMM responded by offering to meet with colleagues from UCU outside of the meeting, along with other colleagues and agree a way forward together to provide the right support. AMM also queried why it would be considered unreasonable by colleagues to expect performance measures to be in place. All colleagues are required to have objectives and performance measures, including AMM who had recently agreed performance measures herself with PH.

NT concurred with AMM on the need to have performance measures in place for all colleagues.

UCU raised that people in academic environments are highly driven and that the recent REF results show that academic performance is doing well without the need for additional performance metrics to be put in place. Colleagues in academia do not feel there is a need for additional performance measures to be put in place and this is the feedback UCU have received.

AM asked for evidence of this feedback from colleagues in academia.

UCU stated that feedback had been provided via UCU as honest feedback has not been given directly to senior leadership, but this feedback had not been listened too.

AMM said that she meets with lots of colleagues from across the organisation and this is not the type of feedback she has received from colleagues but feels that colleagues do provide honest feedback when they have been asked and been given the channels to do so.

6 ID Manchester (UCU) (Diana Hampson, Director of Estates and Facilities)

A presentation was delivered by Diana Hampson on ID Manchester.

Questions were taken from members of UCU and answered by Diana.

Action: Slides to be circulated after the meeting to UCU colleagues.

7 Academic Career Track Changes (UCU)

UCU raised that they have seen academic colleagues change track back and forth and there is no evidence that this is being strategically monitored. UCU requested that a procedure is put in place and agreed with the Unions on when and how academic track changes will take place.

AM stated he had shared a new procedure around Humanities on the topic of academic career track changes and thought this was an approach that would increase the transparency of the process for colleagues.

UCU said they had not seen or had a chance to review the documents circulated by AM and would review these documents after the meeting.

UCU also requested leadership share the University position on the use of Fixed-Term contracts in academia and propose an approach for future use.

AM asked UCU to share their position on the use of Fixed-Term contracts in academia and asked for UCU response to the Universities proposed position.

UCU stated they had shared their position in detail in advance of the meeting today and were disappointed that a response could not be given in the meeting.

AM said he would be prepared to share a response to the points raised in advance of the meeting but was unable to provide a response immediately during the meeting.

UCU reiterated their disappointment in this and said they would feed this back to their membership.

AMM responded by saying this was an unfair reflection of the conversation that had taken place and that a response would be shared by the leadership once all the points raised by UCU could be considered in full.

UCU agreed that this would be acceptable on this occasion.

Action: AM to follow up with UCU after meeting and provide response to points raised by UCU relating to use of Fixed-Term contracts.

8

SEP (UCU)

UCU raised that SEP is causing considerable stress and anxiety amongst colleagues and that no stress risk assessment had taken place to try and support colleagues with this. UCU also raised there should be a steering group established relating to stress for colleagues going through SEP.

UCU also stated that SEP is receiving negative feedback from colleagues and is being viewed nothing more than incredibly damaging and not people centred.

PH responded by saying UCU were making sweeping statements such as SEP being damaging to the University without providing any evidence or information to support the claims and it would be good to understand what UCU mean by this statement.

PH also stated that the process of change is extremely difficult and can understand how this can make colleagues feel. The programme has continued far longer than the University would have originally intended. However, alongside the challenges there are significant benefits – for example, improvements being made to systems and IT equipment for colleagues

UCU stated that although they can see the benefit in centralising activities, they have concerns about the loss of knowledge and experience from within the University following any restructures and are confused about the benefits of SEP and what it is actually intending to deliver.

PH referred UCU colleagues to the SEP pages on StaffNet and requested they look at the benefits SEP is intending to deliver which can all be found on the dedicated StaffNet pages.

UCU pointed out that although there may be benefits relating to SEP this does not negate the negatives it is also causing for colleagues across the University.

PH said he sympathises with the stress and anxiety the programme may be causing colleagues, however clarified that centralised services were not in place at our University in the same way as they are in other Universities at present, and do not intend to do that throughout the SEP programme.

Action: UCU to refer to and review the StaffNet pages for SEP about its benefits.

9 Any Other Business

UCU stated that the remaining agenda items had sufficient information provided in advance of the meeting for a formal response after the meeting. If UCU then feel further discussion or action is needed following formal response from the leadership, they can pick these up as agenda items at future meetings.

UCU also stated there was a reluctance to provide presentations to UCU when they have been requested following previous meetings.

NT asked if UCU could provide examples of this.

UCU provided an example of a finance presentation that contained financial information relating to the University.

NT asked AM to follow this up after the meeting.

Action: AM to follow up with finance and estates and facilities to ensure presentations are shared with UCU.

Next meeting: Monday 18th July 2022, 1pm-2:30pm

Action Log

1 Consultation with trade unions on new People and OD & EDI Strategies

In progress. Views have been sought as part of wider consultations, though there will be additional opportunities for input and discussion.

2 ID Manchester

Complete. Presentation provided as part of meeting by Diana Hampson and circulated.

3 P&DR Review

Complete. AMM provided update as part of the meeting.

4 Use of Fixed-Term contracts

In progress. AM to follow-up after meeting on 13.05.22 with UCU.

5 UCU SEP Benefits

In progress. UCU to review SEP pages on StaffNet following meeting on 13.05.22.

Presentation slide decks

6 In progress. AM to follow-up with finance and facilities to ensure presentations are shared with UCU colleagues.