|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ucu_colour**­NEWSLETTER****AN INFORMATION BULLETIN FOR MEMBERS AT UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON**November 2015 |  |

**Resisting ‘performance management’ at UoB**

We are entering a period of significant change at the University of Brighton. The arrival of a new Vice Chancellor later this term marks another stage in the changing of the guard among the senior management team. The intensification of competition in the HE sector, caused especially by the removal of the cap on student numbers, is driving the new management to try to change long-standing working practices and arrangements at this institution.

The main threat to academic staff comes from the plan to introduce ‘performance management’. This centres on an attempt to transform the existing Staff Development Review, negotiated between the University and the trade unions as a mechanism for supporting staff career development, into a managerial tool for the evaluation of individual performance. This would involve the annual setting of targets for staff by managers and a system of metrics for assessing the extent to which those targets are met. The ultimate goal of such a procedure is performance-related pay: making pay increases or increments dependent on the outcome of the annual appraisal

Where similar schemes exist elsewhere, they are often extremely oppressive and stressful for staff. Not only does research become a highly pressurised activity to be measured by the number and ‘quality’ of ‘outputs’, but data derived from student feedback, complaints and session observations can also be used against lecturers in their performance reviews.

The University is currently preparing the ground for its proposed changes by running focus groups on the SDR. The UCU is committed to defending the existing scheme and resisting any introduction of performance-related pay. The union’s elected officers will express the opposition of academic staff to performance management when we negotiate with senior management, but it may take action by members, such as a refusal to engage with any new scheme that has not been agreed with the unions, to prevent the drastic worsening of our working conditions.

**Contact your union officers**

The officers of the four UCU branches at University of Brighton are:

**Falmer**

Chair: Nadia Edmond (ne9)

Secretary: Debbie Gibberd (dg35)

**Moulsecoomb**

Chair: Judith Watson (jw19)

Secretary: Cyprian Njue (cn57)

**Grand Parade**

Chair: Mark Abel (ma80)

Secretary: Sue Gollifer (scg)

**Eastbourne & Hastings**

Chair: Thelma Lackey (tll)

Secretary: Alec Grant (ad84)

**73% success rate in promotion appeals**

Nearly three out of four of academic promotion applications initially refused during the last promotion round were overturned on appeal. Most of the staff involved sought UCU representation at their appeals, demonstrating one of the important practical benefits of union membership.

The promotions procedure itself was negotiated with the UCU and is based on the demonstrable fulfilment of defined criteria in order to maximise fairness and minimise bias. The overall success rate for the promotion round was 70% with 94% of applications to Senior Lecturer approved.

However, the high appeal success rate also raises the question why so many sound applications were refused at the first stage. The figures also show that, despite the intended objectivity of the system, men had a higher success rate than women. UCU officers are pressing management to address the causes of these problems.

**Campaign news**

**Preventing Prevent**

Part of the government’s anti-terrorist legislation, the Prevent Agenda has now become a legal duty on public bodies, including universities.

The UCU nationally has a policy of opposing Prevent, on the grounds that it encourages discrimination and represents a dangerous threat to freedom of speech and academic freedom.

There are already early signs that, despite their claimed intentions, our university management’s implementation of it may result in the singling out of certain groups of students, and the censoring of particular fields of research.

UCU locally is working with the Students Union to raise these important issues within the academic community.

UCU nationally has produced a guide to Prevent, including a model statement which we are currently getting endorsed by branches. It can be found here:

**http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/r/t/Prevent\_duty\_guidance\_Sept15.pdf**

**Not a member yet? Join at**

**http://join.ucu.org.uk**

**Why join UCU?**

* **UCU is the biggest post-school trade union in the world with 120,000 members**
* **UCU is recognised by University of Brighton as the union which negotiates on behalf of academic staff**
* **UCU negotiates pay levels nationally with the joint employers’ body**
* **UCU has come to a series of agreements with the University of Brighton which govern the working conditions of academic staff, from hours and workloads to grievances and equalities**
* **UCU has helped make Brighton a university with one of the lowest proportions of casual contracts in the country**
* **UCU officers meet regularly with senior management to raise issues of concern to academic staff**
* **UCU reps advise and support individual members with grievance, disciplinary and other cases**
* **UCU campaigns alongside other trade unions to protect workers’ rights.**

**Local agreement eases workloads**

**This academic year sees the implementation in every school of Stage 1 of the new Workload Agreement, concluded between the UCU and the University last year.**

**The agreement reduces average teaching loads by increasing the amount of time for ‘teaching related activity’ – preparation, marking etc. – allocated for each hour of teaching contact. It also provides for transparency in the allocation of workloads across schools.**

**Although not every school has implemented it as fully the UCU would like, the agreement gives lecturers the means to question their workload and to compare it to that of their colleagues.**

Local UCU officers are currently negotiating Stage 2 of the agreement, which will set institution-wide standards for the allocation of teaching relief for responsibilities such as course leadership, admissions tutoring etc. It will also deal with how working on Saturday Open Days will be compensated.