Dear everyone,

Reflecting our commitment to keeping you all updated with what is going on, we are sending this message to you in good time. Please read carefully.

You may have seen that the University & College Union (UCU - the UK's union that represents lecturers and other staff) has called 8 days of strike action in over 60 British Universities, including ours. The background to this is summed up by these points: In higher education…

* women are paid on average 15.1% less than men
* the disability pay gap is 8.7%
* black academic staff earn 12-13% less than white colleagues of the same gender and experience
* salaries have fallen against inflation by over 20% since 2009.
* academic staff work over 50 hours during a typical week.
* Over 100,000 staff are employed on fixed-term contracts, and a further 70,000 are employed on other casual contracts.

The industrial action is intended to force the employers who run higher education to improve the situation in four specific areas:

* Inequality
* Casualization
* Workload
* Salaries

The National Union of Students, which represents you, supports the strike action. You can read their statement about this here <https://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/press-releases/nus-stands-shoulder-to-shoulder-with-ucu-in-fight-for-fair-pay-and-pensions1/>

**Strike days have been called on 8 days in total.**

* **Monday 25th to Friday 29th November**
* **Monday 2nd - Wednesday 4th December**

**No teaching activity will take place during the strike.**

We do not want to strike. But it’s the only option left. The employers have ended negotiations by imposing another below inflation pay award and have flatly refused to address the other issues that the union has raised. Industrial action is the only way that we can fight to improve the situation that affects our jobs and your education.

Beyond the fact that we constantly worry about your progress and the effects of such action on it, staff do not get paid for the time missed to strike. Losing nearly two weeks’ pay is not easy for anybody to manage. In short, strikes are always the last resort.

Given that our University management may meet the demands of the lecturers, the strike may be called off at the last minute. It is essential, therefore, that you keep an eye on your emails to make sure that you keep up to date with developments.

If you need more information on this, please speak to your module tutor(s) or come and see me.

All the best,