



Wolverhampton City & Walsall  
Branch  
Newsletter  
July 2014

[www.wlv.web.ucu.org.uk/](http://www.wlv.web.ucu.org.uk/)

**In this edition...Have your say...Pay dispute and pay docking... Second resits...Green workplaces conference...Faculty restructure... Updates on smoking policy and international travel policy... Communication “strategy”... Faculty reps & Negotiating Committee for 2014/ 2015.**

### **UCU Survey of members... Have your say...**

We invite you to take part in a short survey to help us understand and represent the experiences of as many members as possible. **Any responses will be treated as confidential** and will feed into our formal consultations with the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Human Resources. The results will be published in the next UCU newsletter.

The survey is available at <http://bit.ly/UCUsurvey2014> and can be completed in less than 4 minutes.

Help us to represent your views on:

- the new academic calendar
- workload allocation
- appraisal
- follow-up on the Staff Survey
- Faculty restructure
- criteria for inclusion in the REF
- priorities for UCU at the University of Wolverhampton.

### **Conclusion to the pay dispute and pay docking for the two-hour strike actions**

After a long dispute, which started in the Autumn of 2013, the body representing University employers, UCEA, agreed to offer us a **2 % pay rise for next academic year**. This offer was put to a consultation of all UCU members, and a large majority of members voted to accept it. At the University of Wolverhampton, 94.4% of members who voted agreed to accept the offer.

We would like to **thank all members for their resilience and their support** over this pay dispute, especially for the two-hour strikes, during which pickets were very well attended.

This dispute has been costly to us all, in particular those who have been **docked for the full three days’ pay over the three 2-hour strikes**. UCU repeatedly asked the Vice-Chancellor to reconsider his decision to dock members a full day’s pay for a 2-hour strike, which only a small minority of universities carried out. He remained stubborn on this, claiming that he was ‘following UCEA advice’ (sic).

**If you have been docked for the 2-hour strikes**, please claim your £50 a day from the **fighting fund**, following the link:

[https://ucu.custhelp.com/app/fighting\\_fund](https://ucu.custhelp.com/app/fighting_fund)

We encourage you to put in a **personal grievance** against HR, using the [UCU template](#).

UCU are still very active in relation to this unfair and, we think, illegal docking. We have prepared an individual test case which our Regional Officer may use to challenge the University in court.

UCU have contacted HR, who were in charge of gathering the list of participants to the 2-hour strike, to ask how confident they were on the robustness of their system for listing strikers. All around the University confused UCU members are comparing pay-slips, wondering if they've had a pay rise, a pay cut, a bonus or been docked pay for participating in the three 2-hour strikes. You could be forgiven for giving up trying to work it out. Some people who walked out have lost 3 days' pay. Some have lost one or two. Others haven't been docked at all. Whether some non-strikers *have* been docked we haven't heard, but nothing would surprise us these days.

### **Latest innovation: the second resit**

Senior University management have pushed through a change in academic regulations meaning that **level 3 and 4 students can have a 2nd resit**/ 3rd opportunity for a failed module if the resit Board allows it (it is not clear at this stage what criteria will be used to "select" the lucky students, or the courses which are part of the "pilot", but it looks like all courses are involved except those with resit exemptions). Students in this position will be contacted in August to tell them the good news that, although they thought they had failed, they have another chance to submit. This new procedure has not been subject to any serious consultation (none with UCU/Unison), and, as far as we know, the Student Union had very strong reservations about it. Nevertheless, this will have a significant impact on our members' workload. Nobody seems to have considered that students will be trying to contact their tutors while they are on annual leave, or that setting, marking, moderating and entering grades for extra assessments take time. This change also means that there will be additional Boards in September. UCU will raise these concerns with the OVC in regard to the impact on workload and on the quality of the University's processes, and we will lobby for extra time for module leadership to cover these new tasks.

### **Green Workplaces Conference**

The TUC is hosting a Green Workplaces Conference on Friday, July 11th at Congress House, London. This will include the wider launch of our new UCU Environment Rep Handbook that was unveiled in Manchester recently at the UCU Congress.

Use the link below for further details and registration for this free event.

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/events/union-effect-greening-workplace-11th-july-2014>

## Stand clear of the doors, please...



Over the last few months many observant UCU members may have noticed staff at higher levels in both new and existing buildings disappearing, notably three in the 'Faulty' (sic) of Science and Engineering, two in the Faculty of Arts, and three in the Faculty of Education, Health & Well-Being. This is an alarming number of staff to have disappeared and we can only suspect recent structural developments are to blame. If there is something waiting higher up that has frightened these staff or the lifts are broken we feel members on lower level should know, or will find out soon enough. The lift in FSE appears particularly hazardous. In the meantime, we advise members to 'keep calm and carry on' and to remain at their level. Those on Demonstrators and Lecturer contracts please climb the stairs.

## Updates on smoking policy and international travel policy

Members should be aware that a revision to the **Smoking Policy now states that E-cigarettes are banned** within all University buildings.

The [Smoking Policy](#) states: “During 2013 the University as part of its duty of care to its community reviewed the use of electronic cigarettes across all campuses. The University decided that allowing e-cigarette use in the workplace is not in keeping with the spirit of current legislation and on a practical level the similarity in appearance of e-cigarettes to regular cigarettes, may make it extremely difficult to police the existing no-smoking policy. Following the review a decision was taken to prohibit the use, including charging of electronic cigarettes within all University buildings from 1st January 2014.”

The [International Travel Policy](#) has also been updated. This policy covers all types of work including trips not funded by the University but undertaken as a result of the employee working at the University of Wolverhampton.

## The University communication “strategy”

Like you, we’re all feeling utterly empowered by the University’s strategic communications rollout strategy, consisting (as of course you know) of a series of consultative meetings attended by Key Thought Leader Influencers, held at midnight in the crypt every fifth Thursday of the month. Or something. If – like us – you unaccountably haven’t been invited, or find it difficult to decode the coloured smoke emitted from Deanery meetings, you might be feeling a little disoriented by the constant stream of trivia directed our way, while we all struggle to work out the important stuff, like who’s in charge of what this week.

In 2012, the Staff Survey revealed that communications between management and staff simply didn’t function. The VC and his friends promised change, yet we stagger on finding things out accidentally or late. Take the Research Buy-Out and PhD Bursary competition. An excellent idea in principle – but who decided that applications for major projects costing hundreds of thousands of pounds and setting the research course of the institution for decades to come could be sorted out in *a week* (and judged in less than that)? This is in a workplace which took 8 months to authorise a replacement printer cartridge and has run out of metal spoons (We’re not joking).

If only the Communications Strategy worked well enough to identify someone responsible for the Communications Strategy! In the meantime, in the absence of ‘cascading’ (which isn’t a word), you may as well read your tea leaves or watch the sky.

<p><b>Who are your Faculty reps for 2014/ 15?</b> Please contact your Faculty rep if you have any issue that you want to discuss confidentially.</p>		
<p><b>Faculty of Arts</b> Anne-Marie Beaumont (Walsall) Frances Clarke (Walsall) John Clementson (City) Callum Ives (City) Frank Wilson (City) Cécile Hatier (Health and Safety, City)</p>	<p><b>Faculty of Education, Health and Well-being.</b> Veronica Grant (Walsall) Rachel Clarke (City) We need more reps for city and Walsall campus... Please consider standing for election.</p>	
<p><b>Faculty of Social Sciences</b> Mike Cunningham Jennifer Hulme Lee Crofts</p>	<p><b>Faculty of Science and Engineering</b> Sue Gill James Vickers Adrian Priest Sarah Mount</p>	
<p><b>UCU Negotiating Committee in 2014/15</b></p>		
<p><u>Chair:</u> Catherine Lamond (FEHW) <u>Vice Chair:</u> Ben Andrews (FEHW &amp; Academic Related) <u>Secretary:</u> Cécile Hatier (FoArts) <u>Assistant Secretary:</u> Kate Lees (FEHW)</p>	<p>Pauline Anderson (FoSS) Paul Barrow (FSE) Aidan Byrne (FoArts) John Chorley (FEHW) Andy Cramp (FEHW) Lee Crofts (FoSS) Mike Cunningham (FoSS)</p>	<p>Stuart Farquhar (FoSS) Jane Harvey (FEHW) Mike Haynes (FoSS) Julie Hughes (FEHW) Penny Welch (FoSS) 1 vacancy (Walsall)</p>
<p><b>UCU City Branch Officers and other representatives</b></p>		
<p>Chair: Mike Cunningham Vice Chair: Mike Haynes Secretary: Aidan Byrne Treasurer: Alan Apperley</p>	<p>Membership: Karin Dannehl Equality: Penny Welch Health and Safety: Gill Outterside Auditors: Chris Fullwood and John Dale</p>	
<p><b>UCU Walsall Branch Officers and other representatives</b></p>		
<p>Chair: John Chorley Secretary and Membership: Ben Andrews</p>	<p>Equality: Vacant Women: Julie Hughes</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Other staff reps</b></p> <p>You can check who your Faculty representatives are on Academic and Faculty Boards here <a href="http://www.wlv.ac.uk/staff/services/ours/elections.aspx">http://www.wlv.ac.uk/staff/services/ours/elections.aspx</a> .</p>
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**The Negotiating committee, Branch officers and school reps hope that you will have a relaxing summer break.**

UCU Negotiating Committee July 2014