

JOINT UNION CONSULTATIVE AND NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (JUCNC).

Minutes of the meeting held 11 September 2019, Jordanstown Campus.

PRESENT

Damian McAlister (People & Culture), Niamh Lamond (Chief Operating Officer), Paul Agnew (UNITE), Richard Young (UNITE), Kevin McAdam (UNITE), Linda Moore (UCU), Aisling O'Beirn (UCU), Lindsay Dawe (UCU), Paul Davidson (People & Culture), Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Professor Paul Bartholomew (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Kelly McBride (People & Culture), Professor Ian Montgomery (PVC Global Engagement), Professor Carol Curran (Executive Dean).

IN ATTENDANCE

Christine Irwin (People & Culture) and Rhona Reid (People & Culture).

APOLOGIES

Marianne Buick (UNISON), Judith Hough (UNITE), Craig Shilliday (UNITE), Gareth Scott (UNITE), Rhonda Black (UNITE).

19.15 As Mr McAlister was attending a funeral during the early part of the meeting, Mr Davidson chaired the meeting.

19.16 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 28 MAY 2019.

Mr Young noted two typographic errors which will be corrected before the minutes are published.

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

19.17 MATTERS ARISING.

Facilities time for Senior Trade Union Representatives (19.07).

Mr Davidson advised that People and Culture had worked with UCU to implement the increased allocation of back-fill for senior trade union representatives (increase from 0.5 FTE to 1 FTE). Dr Moore asked that it be noted that UCU had requested that the allocation should increase to 2 FTE however this was not approved by the University

Mr Davidson noted that the offer of back-fill for UNITE (0.5 FTE) was still available and asked that UNITE provide details on how they wish to use their allocation.

Grade 6 post in Employability and Careers (19.11)

At the JUCNC in May 2019, UCU raised concerns in relation to changes to the grade structure in Careers and Employability and in particular the decision to advertise a post at grade 6 in Magee when it was previously a grade 7. It was noted that following the meeting in May, Professor Bartholomew provided UCU with information which confirmed that the number and average grade of staff in Careers and Employability has increased in recent years.

19.18 GBD UPDATE.

This agenda item opened with a detailed presentation from Mrs Lamond on progress with

the building of blocks BC and BD. It was noted that occupancy of the buildings will be in 23 months' time. Mrs Lamond advised that there will be a period of in-depth engagement with staff and the trade unions in the lead up to the move to Belfast

A long discussion followed which included discussion on the following matters:

- Mr Young noted that staff are concerned about the availability of private meeting rooms in Belfast. It was agreed that there should be further staff engagement on this issue.
- Mr Young enquired about the availability of secure storage of bicycles. Professor Montgomery advised that 181 secure spaces are available.
- Mr Young initiated discussion in relation to potential situations where course revalidation would coincide with the move to Belfast. Professor Bartholomew advise that the timing of revalidation would be sensitive to any such concerns.
- Mrs Lamond noted that while her presentation related mainly to the physical build, significant staff engagement is being planned on a range of 'staff experience' related projects.
- Dr Moore noted the importance of equality screening and ensuring that changes to policies and/or working practices are progressed through the appropriate consultation fora.
- Ms Lamond noted that consultants (MovePlan), have been engaged to manage the move logistics. She further advised that people would be relocated in phases.

It was agreed that further consideration is required to plan deep and meaningful consultation on all aspects of the relocation to Belfast

19:19 SR2034

Ms Lamont advised that the University is currently reflecting on the way forward with SR2034.

19:20 INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNAL REVIEW AND UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr McAlister advised that University Council will review the way forward with the recommendations at its meeting in October.

Mr Dawe advised that UCU had written to Jenny Pyper, Chair of University Council, raising significant concerns.

Dr Moore stated that UCU wishes to hear details of how the senior staff have been made accountable for the BRG process.

19:21 REDUNDANCY POLICY, COMPROMISE AGREEMENTS & FIXED-TERM CONTRACTS.

Mr Davidson presented paper JUCNC/19/08. It was noted that the paper was developed in response to previous discussions with the trade unions in relation to redundancy compensation, compromise agreements and measures to limit the use of long-term fixed-term contracts. A discussion followed in relation to the proposals and options detailed in

the paper.

It was agreed that the unions would give careful consideration to the proposals and options and provide a response.

19:22 2/3 Stage Recruitment

Mr Davidson presented paper JUCNC19/09 in relation to the removal of the internal trawl. The paper details three options.

Option 1: Abandon the internal trawl but retain the Redeployment Register Trawl.

Option 2: Abandon the internal trawl and run the Redeployment Register Trawl concurrently with the external advertisement.

Option 3: Abandon the internal trawl and conduct a paper-based audit of the Redeployment Register before advertising externally.

Both unions advised that they could not agree to any of these options. Mr McAlister noted that this matter has been discussed on a number of occasions and it appears unlikely that agreement will be reached and therefore the University has decided to implement option one.

19:23 Development Appraisal Review (DAR)

This item was presented for information. Mr McAlister advised JUCNC that the University intend to review the current DAR process. It was agreed that there will be meaningful consultation with the unions as part of the review.

19:24 20% flexibility clause in academic-related contracts

UCU raised concerns in relation to the clause in academic-related contracts of employment which refer to staff on occasion being required to work 20% outside normal office hours. Mr Davidson advise that the intention of this clause was to provide mutual professional flexibility and when applied correctly could be of benefit to both the department and the employee. Mr Davidson further advised that departments should not be requiring staff to work beyond normal office hours on a frequent basis, rather this clause should be used sparingly to deal with particular business needs e.g. a one of conference in the early evening that the member of staff is coordinating. Departments should reciprocate the 'good will' shown by staff by allowing equivalent time-off.

Mr McAlister advised that as part of the University's commitment to improving working lives, a new flexi-time scheme has been piloted in a number of departments. Consultation will take place on the possible roll out of the scheme across the University. The flexi-time scheme may help to address the issues with the '20% flexibility' clause in academic-related contracts.

19:25 Employee Wellbeing Week.

Mr McAlister reported good participation levels in activities as part of wellbeing week. Mr Young and Dr Moore asked that thanks be passed on to Geoff Gillan and his team for their work on health and wellbeing.

19:26 Organisational Values.

Mr McAlister advised JUCNC of the ongoing work to define organisational values.

19:27 Policy Framework.

Mr Davidson opened the discussion by noting that the University has significantly changed its approach to policy development in recent years, with a much greater focus on engagement with staff and trade unions. He advised that People and Culture have been in discussions with the Office of the University Secretary to ensure that this approach is embedded in the University's Policy Framework.

Mr Davidson advised that in relation to engagement with staff, the framework now makes clear that policy development should be a collaborative exercise involving a broad range of stakeholders, rather than an exercise conducted by the 'policy lead' in isolation. Mr Davidson further advised that early engagement should take place to help ensure that the 'policy lead' fully understands the needs and expectations of the users of the policy. The policy framework now includes guidance on techniques that policy leads may use to help ensure effective staff engagement.

A discussion took place on the format of consultation with the trade unions on draft policies and in particular the appropriate forum for discussing different types of policies. Mr Davidson suggested the following approach for discussion:

- **Policies that impact on main terms and conditions of employment:** Such policies should come to JNC/JUCNC as appropriate.
- **Policies that impact on the working practices of employees:** Such policies should come to JNC/JUCNC as appropriate.
- **Strategies and Policies relating to core business of the University:** Strategies and policies of this kind can be discussed with the trade unions at either a JNC meeting or a 'stand alone' meeting between the 'policy lead' and the trade unions.
- **Policies relating to regulatory or legislative compliance:** Such policies can be discussed with the trade unions at a 'stand alone' meeting between the 'policy lead' and the trade unions.
- **Policies relating to Health, Safety and Wellbeing:** Such policies should be considered at the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

Mrs McBride noted that arrangements are now in place for monthly policy review meetings involving People and Culture, the unions and the relevant 'policy lead'.

19:28 Review of Health Sciences.

Dr Moore stated that UCU are concerned that People and Culture plan to meet with staff in Health Sciences to discuss a severance scheme and that there had been no consultation with UCU on a severance scheme. Mr Davidson advised that People and Culture are not meeting with staff to discuss a severance scheme, no such scheme exists, rather the meeting is to discuss the provision of the Organisation Structure Change Policy. The Associate Head of School issued the invitation to the meeting and in error used the words 'severance scheme' rather than Organisation Structure Change Policy. The Associate Head of School quickly rectified this error.

19:29 Academic Workload Management Model.

Mr McAlister notified JUCNC that People and Culture intend to initiate a review of the

Workload allocation model. Dr Moore noted that UCU are opposed to 'metric based' workload models.

19:30 Management Reviews

At JUCNC in May 2019, consideration was given to a draft 'fact sheet' on management reviews (paper JUCNC/19/03). At the meeting in May some amendments were suggested by the unions. At the meeting today, Mr Davidson provided a revised paper which incorporates the amendments suggested (paper JUCNC/19/10 includes the amendments).

Mr Young enquired as to whether the unions could request a management review. Mr McAlister confirmed that this is possible.

19:31 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Climate Emergency

UCU noted that it supports the 30-minute lunchtime stoppage as part of the climate emergency campaign and asked that the University also confirms its support for the campaign.

Mr Young noted that UNITE also support the campaign and intends to continue its practice of raising environmental issues through the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

May Bank Holiday

Mr Young noted that at a national level there are plans to review the date of the May Bank Holiday for 2020 and asked that the University consider amending the schedule of closure days.

19:32 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.

Meeting End