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150,000 MARCH AGAINST AUSTERITY



NATIONAL STRIKE 25 & 26 MAY

NORTH WEST RALLY – UMSU, OXFORD ROAD

GUEST SPEAKER SALLY HUNT UCU GENERAL SECRETARY



Sally Hunt, UCU General Secretary, will speak at strike rally at the University of Manchester on Wednesday 25 May, 12.15pm in Academy 2 in the Student Union Building

Adam Ozanne, UMUCU President : Time to stand together for fair pay

Following university employers' "final" pay offer of 1.1% for 2016/17 – up an enormous 0.1% on their starting offer! – UCU has called for a two day strike on 25 and 26 May.

The University of Manchester branch of UCU will be playing a major part in this national campaign as we will be hosting a rally for all HE staff in the north-west taking industrial action on 25 May at which Sally Hunt, the UCU General Secretary, and Lynn Collins, the NWTUC Regional Secretary, will speak.

HE pay has fallen 14.5% in real terms over the past six years. The gender pay gap persists, with female academics earning on average £6103 less than their male colleagues. Staff costs as a percentage of total costs have declined as more and more is spent on new buildings and the salaries of a few top managers. Many VCs have awarded themselves generous pay increases: their average pay rose 3% between 2013/14 and 2014/15. It is time to both narrow the gender pay gap and make up some of the losses of the past six years. The HE sector, which generated a total surplus of £1.85bn in 2014-15, can afford more than 1.1% but our employers will not agree unless we insist on a fairer deal.

This is true at The University of Manchester, which is generating surpluses of over £45m each year. Despite its supposed commitment to Social Responsibility, there is evidence that pay inequality is increasing: the number of high-earning staff paid over £100k increased by 50% from 81 to 122 between 2013 and 2015 while much lower paid catering staff in UMC Ltd are losing their jobs and having their hours cut.

Trade unions are only as strong and effective as their members are willing to stand together and support one another. Show that UMUCU members support fair pay, gender equality and secure contracts in this university and across the HE sector by joining the picket lines around the campus in the morning on each day and coming to the rally on Wednesday 25th.

Over 50 staff have left or are leaving IT Services as a result of last year's s188 process, and they are leaving a big hole. IT Services has changed from the place they joined and they take with them vital skills and knowledge, in some cases built over decades. However, it isn't only skills that are lost: a community is being broken apart. Close working relationships, friendships and a mix of dedicated and talented people has helped keep ITS running smoothly over the years, and the numerous well-attended leaving events over recent months have highlighted the sense of community – the bonds extending well beyond the confines of an office – that is being lost in the process.

Morale is low among those remaining and those still in the process of leaving. We are told by senior management that they know this is case but we are not asked why. When further changes, such as open-plan working, are challenged with peer reviewed research, management resorts to personal anecdotes to justify their position and no other option is considered. The departure of the former Director of ITS could have been used to address the problems of a heavy top-down management style. Instead it feels like the management style has remained the same and an opportunity has been lost.

Here are the thoughts of one of the last to take voluntary severance rather than risk facing compulsory redundancy:

"It's been a dispiriting 6 months since the redundancies were announced. Eight years in IT services will be ending with the fizzling out of another career and, while the payoff will cover living expenses whilst I retrain, it won't heal any wounds.

"Seeing the imposition of a management 'vision' and the destruction of a community that that was planned all along leaves me feeling powerless and purposeless. But perhaps the most difficult aspect to tolerate is the simultaneous call from management for solutions to low morale with a curious lack of interest as to why morale is low.

"I've no doubt that each person in ITS will have their own perspective on why morale is so low and I can only speak for myself. After Paul Harness left I saw an abrupt change in management style from the broadly collegial and supportive approach that has always been common across UK universities, to an ill-fitting corporate style characterised by aggressive, arrogant, boorish and bigoted behaviour from many managers and at all levels. They saw a step change with a new approach to management in IT Services and were brimming with big ideas for the little people. We saw the introduction of a detrimental transformation which had been tried before elsewhere without success and saw the exact same approach planned for us. The issue of low morale was originally identified in the staff survey last June, long before the plan for 68 redundancies was announced. This issue was kicked into the long grass with a new working group, which has still not published any outcomes but has been privately described by some members of the group as a 'tick-box exercise'.

"The arrival of a new interim director led to the almost instant recognition that low morale was becoming a serious problem but the only action that is now being taken is to ask staff 'How can we boost our morale?'. Well my response is that I don't think we need cheering up – we need the IT leadership team to address the systemic failures that the 'transformation' introduced. Anything else is just papering over the cracks."

Austerity - an economic necessity ? Not according to 150,000!

On Saturday 16th April around 150,000 marched through London with the People's Assembly to demand decent Health, homes, jobs and education. Manchester filled three coaches and the trade union UNITE sent over 100 on the train. Recent events meant the demonstration was flooded with demands for David Cameron and George Osborne to resign. Teachers and doctors marched with students, steel workers and campaign groups. The Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, marched alongside Manchester People's Assembly for a while and addressed a packed Trafalgar Square.

All the major media channels covered the event on line and some carried it on their bulletins. The People's Assembly is a movement of all anti-austerity campaigns, trade unions, parties and individuals and is supported by our UCU branch. The next national event is a huge Convoy to Calais funded by four national unions.

Update on Negotiations on restructuring, redeployment and related policies

Following the vote by UMUCU members to accept the University's proposals on policies and procedures relating to restructures and redeployment (including voluntary severance payments and pay protection) there have been a sequence of meetings between the trade unions and management on the details of the new policies. We are taking the opportunity to encourage a more organised oversight of workforce planning and restructures, captured in a proposed "Security of Employment Policy / Redundancy Avoidance Agreement" which draws on best practice in other universities. As well as these strategic matters, we have also been finalising the detailed wording of specific policies, and establishing precise timelines for restructuring and redeployment processes. As we have seen in recent and ongoing reorganisations, such details can be crucially important for the individuals caught up in these processes. The meetings continue on a roughly monthly basis and we will report further as the final versions of the policies and procedures (which will need ratification by UCU HQ) become available.

Report from Paul Bennett : UMUCU Assistant Secretary for Retired Members

UCU policy is that members who retire and wish to continue as union members are transferred to the appropriate regional retired members' branch unless they specifically state that they wish to remain in their workplace branch (www.ucu.org.uk/retiredmemberbranches). A few years ago there was a retired members' branch in the north-west, but it seems not to be functioning at present. Some regions have active retired members' branches; for example, the East Midlands branch (www.ucu-em-rmb.org.uk/) publishes a newsletter and meets three times a year, in gatherings that are part business and part socialising. There is also an annual national meeting of reps from retired members' branches.

Following discussion at a recent Executive meeting, I'm writing to ask if any retired UMUCU members would like to get together at some point, to discuss any relevant matters. Or would there be any interest in trying to revive the north-west retired members' branch? Please contact the UMUCU office if you think either of these is a good idea.

Get Involved – it's YOUR UNION

The UMUCU Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 8th June, in SG1 Samuel Alexander Building. The election of UMUCU officers and the Executive Committee 2016/17 will take place at the meeting. If you are interested in standing for a position as an officer, ordinary Exec member, Local Contact, or getting more involved in any other way, please contact us. We are always looking for volunteers to get involved in the local branch and particularly need members to help out with Newsletter distribution, recruitment and personal case work.

Would you be interested in becoming a Local Contact for your work area? All it involves is referring your colleagues to the UMUCU office if they have a problem; speaking to your colleagues about how important it is to join UCU, passing on information and keeping the branch informed of any local issues.

If you would like more information, please contact Fiona Campbell on Tel: 0161 275 3080 or e-mail ucu@manchester.ac.uk

UMUCU Executive Committee Members

Officers: President – *Adam Ozanne*; Senior Vice President – *Adel Nasser*; Treasurer – *Kamie Kitmitto*; Secretary – *Roger Walden*; Membership and Organising Secretary – *David Swanson*; Assistant Secretary Health & Safety – *Tanya Aspinall*; Assistant Secretary Personal Cases – *Gregory Lane-Serff*; Assistant Secretary Newsletter / Website – *Cath Booth*; Assistant Secretary Retired Members – *Paul Bennett*.

Ordinary Executive Members: *Philippa Browning, Louise Carney, Liam Curless, Penny Hicks, Blaise Nkwenti-Azeh, Patricia Conaghan, James Newson, Aneez Esmail, Richie Nimmo, Jessica Patterson, James Newson.*