

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

JOINT NEGOTIATION AND CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 February 2017

Present: James Cussens, UCU, Computer Science, JC (**Meeting Chair**)
David Duncan, Registrar and Secretary, DJD
Paula Tunbridge, Deputy Director of HR, PT
Stephen Talboys, Director of Estates and Campus Services, ST
Richard Armitage, Unite Chair, Physics, RA
Bob Hide, Unite, Physics, BH
Helen Adcock, Unison Secretary, YPP, HA
Jenny Underhill, Unison, Security, JU
Frances Daly, Unison, Law, FD
Joanna de Groot, UCU Vice-President, History, JDG
Anna Duarte, UCU, Centre for Health Economics, AD
Geoff Wall, UCU President, English and Related Literature, GW

In Attendance: Janet Haffegge, HR Partner, JH
Layla Hemingway, HR Officer (Secretariat), LH

Apologies: Jeremy Lindley, Director of Finance
Rod Peet, Deputy Director of Finance

1. Agenda Item 1 – Appointment of Chair

James Cussens, UCU, was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

2. Agenda Item 2 - Apologies

Apologies were recorded as noted above.

3. Agenda Item 3 - Approval of Minutes of the Last Meeting

JDG commented that she could not recollect the following comment by PT on page 3 'PT commented that the offer of appointment letter is a formal document, and suggested the on-boarding information web pages would be a more appropriate place to share union contact details.'

DJD subsequently stated that he recalled the statement from PT and felt that the minutes were accurate.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2016 were approved.

4. Agenda Item 4 - Matters Arising

On-boarding Information

PT stated that the on-boarding web pages have been updated to include information on all three unions, their key contacts and links to their local websites.

Union members were concerned about and how readily accessible the information was for new starters and existing staff. They felt that it was reasonable to request that this information was included in the offer of appointment letter.

JH clarified that information about union membership is included in the statement of main terms and conditions of employment which is given to all new starters.

DJD proposed that consideration be given to the degree of prominence given to Trade union information on the HR webpages.

Action – PT to consider where to include union contact details on the HR website (to liaise with JDG).

GW added in his capacity as a member of Senate he was supplied with a list of new starters and questioned why this information was not available to him as a union representative. GW added that other Russell Group universities provided this information to union representatives.

DJD commented that the data protection issues in the two cases were distinctly different.

GW would liaise with his colleagues at other universities to understand how they had addressed this issue.

Equal Pay Report

PT stated that it had been anticipated that the equal pay report would be available for consideration by the JNCC at this meeting. However, UEB had requested further analysis which was being carried out by Professor Jo Swaffield from the Department of Economics and Related Studies. PT indicated that the report would be presented to UEB on 22nd February and would then be shared with relevant committees, including the JNCC.

JDG commented on the paper she had circulated prior to the meeting regarding equal pay.

PT stated Iona Rodger had recently joined the HR department as Reward Manager and would be invited to the next meeting to talk to the Equal Pay report.

Action – Equal Pay Report to be considered at next meeting (invite Iona Rodger).

5. Agenda Item 5 - Strategic Update

Student Recruitment

DJD updated on student recruitment for 2017 stating that the numbers for both home and overseas students are close to the numbers from last year. DJD added that UEB are giving increased attention to the quality of the student intake.

Research and Teaching

DJD stated that research grants are doing well and referred to the upcoming REF, preparation for which was discussed at Senate last week.

DJD added that John Robinson, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students, is leading on the TEF. DJD stated the University is committed to taking part in TEF and had made a detailed submission as part of the next phase. The University had also engaged in the national consultation on how the TEF model should work, and expressed concerns around the use of metrics and benchmarking.

Higher Education Bill

DJD explained that under the HE Bill HEFCE would be replaced by the Office for Students. Research funding was also moving to UKRI which would incorporate the roles of Research Councils and HEFCE's distribution of QR funding. The University had sought to influence the debate on the bill by a number of routes.

Senior Appointments

DJD updated on the following senior appointments;

- Pro Vice Chancellor for Business and Community – recruitment is ongoing
- Registrar and Secretary – interviews have been organised for April with the successful candidate expected to start towards the end of the Summer term
- Human Resources Director – Paula Tunbridge will be Acting HRD for an interim period. The post would be advertised and the incoming Registrar and Secretary would be involved in the recruitment process
- Mark Ormrod, Dean of Arts and Humanities, is currently away from work – Professor Judith Buchanan is Acting Dean and Dr Kate Giles is Acting Associate Dean for Research.

Assistant Registrar – Promoting Community Cohesion and Respect

DJD reported the appointment of Claire Massheder to the above post. Claire would be working within Student and Academic Services, focussing on students and the university community with some liaison with external bodies. The post would also take on casework, policy work and lead responsibility for bullying and harassment cases involving students.

JDG asked about cases which involve staff/students. DJD explained that Claire would lead on cases raised by students and HR would lead on cases raised by staff, and communication between the two would be key to resolving any areas of overlap.

Academic Promotions

DJD had communicated to the unions that a short-life working group chaired by Saul Tendler, DVC&P, had been formed to review specific aspects of the promotions criteria. DJD added that they were not looking at significant changes and, after initial discussions, the group would consult, particularly with UCU, before going back to Senate

JDG commented on how well UCU and management had worked in partnership on previous changes.

Brexit

DJD stated that concern continued about issues of research funding, student recruitment, staff contracts and the University's reputation (particularly its standings in world rankings). The VC is very keen to offer reassurances to staff and to maintain strong links with European partners, even if funding arrangements change. The University's strategy was to continue to be international in relation to student recruitment, staff recruitment and research.

JdG added that UCU are doing work to reassure staff who may have concerns about Brexit.

Financial Update

DJD reported that the finances are looking strong at quarter 2 and it was anticipated that the University would meet its income targets for the year, with no significant concerns about cash flow at this stage.

HA asked about what contingency measures the University will have in place with regards to cash flow, to protect against further cuts.

DJD stated that currently cash flow is strong but will dip in Autumn before fees come in. There is a facility in place to borrow extra money from the bank, although the current thinking is this will probably not have to be used.

HA said it is good to see the IPC doing well, however she had some concerns about the vulnerability of the younger students. HA asked what provisions were in place for pastoral care for those under 18.

DJD explained that quite a significant percentage of the IPC students are over 18 but that there is a proportion of under 18's. Kaplan, who manage student recruitment for the IPC, provide additional support to what is already in place for all University students. Absence rates are also monitored and, should there be concerns, bespoke support can be provided in those cases.

6. Agenda Item 6 – Equality Issues

DJD explained that a working group had been formed on student misconduct, which is the University's response to the UUK report about violence against women, race hate and harassment. DJD would be chairing this group, with Kate Dodd taking over as Chair from 18 March. DJD stated the main focus of the group was awareness raising, some bespoke training, revision of the student discipline regulation and the production of guidelines for everyone to use. It would also consider how people report harassment and the question of student/staff relations.

JDG stated that UCU members, who may be personal supervisors of students, can become involved in student/student cases. JDG encouraged the working group to consider online training for those staff.

Action - DJD to feed back to the student misconduct working group.

PT added that she had discussed with Kate Dodd the possible use of the mediation pool for situations of student/student conflict.

DJD stated the draft E&D strategy is still being finalised by Maria Ayaz (Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion). Maria would be consulting with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. DJD added the aim is to finalise the strategy before the end of the academic year.

JDG expressed an interest in union colleagues taking part in the consultation on the strategy.

DJD stated he would ask Maria to make contact to arrange for the unions to take part in the consultation. It was proposed that Maria Ayaz attend the next meeting, to update on progress in that area.

Action – DJD to arrange contact between Maria Ayaz and union colleagues and invite Maria to May JNCC meeting.

7. Agenda Item 7 – Collective Communication

JC stated there was a question about why this agenda item was labelled as ‘communication.’ HA felt it should be ‘consultation and negotiation’ rather than ‘communication.’

JH stated this agenda item is an update from the regular collective communication meetings we hold in relation to organisational change. It is listed as ‘communication’ in light of the change in the law which removed staff on fixed-term contracts from the requirement to collectively consult.

JDG stated that union colleagues had previously expressed concerns about their contribution to organisational change and discussions had been held about the development of a mutually agreed protocol. Since then there had been a number of occasions when things had not worked as expected and JDG felt that the unions had been put at a disadvantage.

HA expressed concern about late notification of meetings and informal approaches.

PT suggested a meeting with union colleagues outside of the JNCC. PT added that the template change documents and checklists had been circulated for discussion at the Collective Communications meeting.

JDG suggested heads of units in departments needed more training on issues of timing and sequencing.

Some union colleagues questioned the support given by HR to Heads of Departments and Managers during change initiatives.

PT stated that HR offer a great deal of support and spend significant time with managers when we know that change is happening.

DJD reiterated that HR are very good at giving advice and offering support but in the devolved structure that operates within the University it is up to the Head of Department to make the decisions.

JH advised that UEB had agreed to additional time off for union representatives relating to restructures. JH stated there is a sliding scale in relation to the size of the restructure and liaison with Finance about how this system will work is ongoing.

GW suggested it would be good to have this clarified at a departmental level as the current process is inconsistent and informal.

JH explained that she writes to all HOD's to advise of allocations. The current allocations roll-over year on year and we rely on union colleagues to inform us of any changes by the end of September so these can be taken into account in the quarter 1 figures.

8. Agenda Item 8 – Special Interest Groups

Rewarding Excellence

PT reported on ongoing discussions regarding the Rewarding Excellence and Making the Difference Schemes.

JDG stated that the unions had requested central funding for the Making the Difference scheme and this issue was still to be concluded.

PT updated on the Rewarding Excellence scheme, which ran in its current format last year (more details included in the briefing note sent to TU colleagues).

FD requested the breakdown of applicants by grade.

Action – PT to ask the Rewards team for this information.

PT also advised that a new version of the professional and support staff probation procedures was on the agenda to be discussed at the next SIG meeting. A separate, new procedure will be introduced for Research only and Teaching only staff.

9. Agenda Item 9 – UCU, Unison and Unite Agenda Items

Athena Swan Forum

FD asked for clarity on which staff the Athena Swan Forum is targeted at. DJD clarified that all staff are invited to attend the forum. DJD explained that the Athena Swan Charter covers all academic departments, including support staff within those academic departments. The Charter covers all staff within the University wide award, but support departments cannot apply for departmental awards.

FD stated she had been under the impression that the forum was going to be a general gender forum.

DJD suggested that Anna Reader attend a future meeting to discuss the University's approach to Athena Swan. FD was encouraged to speak to Maria Ayaz or Anna Reader about the equality forums.

Equal Pay

JDG explained that as part of its national campaign, UCU wanted to make progress to address the pay gap at a local level.

FD added that Unison also support the equal pay agenda.

It was agreed this issue would be discussed further at the May JNCC.

Action – Equal Pay to be included on May JNCC Agenda

Performance Review

AD advised that UCU conducted a survey in April 2016 which highlighted the fact that a high number of people believed the PR process was not improving productivity. There were also concerns about confidentiality. UCU conducted another survey in December 2016 and again people had the same concerns about confidentiality and increased concerns that the process is not helping productivity. AD added the survey received a response rate of 20%. The high level results would be shared.

AD stated that UCU would like to reopen negotiation on the PR process to ensure it is a process that contributes to professional development. Only 32% of people think it is supportive and AD asked to hear from senior management about how they feel the PR process is helping productivity.

Action – UCU to share feedback from latest PR survey.

PT stated she was very happy to receive a summary report from UCU. The PR process had only just been through one full cycle and a commitment was made to do a review after one cycle. This would happen and feedback would be sought. The review would commence in April/May and all unions would be consulted as part of that review. Important and anonymous feedback would also come through the staff survey which included questions about PR/performance management.

PT stated that in the past there had been concerns about people choosing not to be involved. She reported that only 8 staff had not been willing to take part, and 3 of those gave their reason as being on fixed term contracts which were due to end soon.

GW asked whether the issues around confidentiality could be raised as a matter of concern during those focus groups.

DJD stated that as a moderator he was not interested in individuals' ratings but used the information to look at trends in the data between departments.

New VS Scheme

JDG asked for clarification as to whether VS was available to staff, as she understood that the last VS scheme had come to an end in December 2015.

PT explained that there is currently no formal scheme under which staff can apply for VS. There had always been conversations with individuals around dignified exits, for a whole range of reasons. At UEB's request, guidance had been provided to HOD's to ensure clarity and consistency.

GW asked if the new guidance could be shared.

Action - PT to consider this further.

10. Agenda Item 10 – HR Update

Professional and Support Staff Survey

PT indicated that the response to the Professional Services Survey was positive for HR in terms of the service provided.

DJD added that the responses showed that our professional and support services are well thought of.

HA added that it is good to see the results and asked if the HR feedback can be narrowed down to specific teams as she was concerned about delays relating to pension projections.

PT explained that for USS pensions, the timescale was out of the control of the pensions team but she would discuss this feedback with Gillian Hamilton, Pensions Manager.

HR Strategy

PT stated that the draft strategy document would be made available on the HR webpages. Due to Pat Lofthouse's departure, the strategy had been scaled back to 2 years as the new HRD may want to reassess the team's direction. HR would be attending various meetings to present the strategy.

PT added she welcomed the views of union colleagues and their members.

Action - Union colleagues to feedback views and comments on HR Strategy document.

Interim HR Structure and New Appointments

PT stated that the following interim appointments had been made;

- Paula Tunbridge - Acting HRD
- Rachael Millhouse - Acting Head of HR Operations
- Lisa Teasdale – new appointment to replace Rob Hargrave, looking after HR Services + Systems and Communications + IT (CIT).

The HR Leadership Team would be Paula Tunbridge, Helen Selvidge, Susan Kane, joined by Rachael Millhouse.

Rachael Millhouse would continue as HR Partner role for Professional and Support departments and Layla Hemingway would be acting as HR Adviser split 50% between Professional and Support Services and 50% Science Departments.

Action – Paula to send an updated Organisation Chart for the HR Team.

Staff Survey

PT made reference to the briefing document which was sent prior to the meeting. The staff survey would take place in May.

Compliance update

PT updated that the licence has been renewed for another 4 year period. There were still considerations around how to manage right to work for casual staff and student term time working.

Professional@York Awards and Conference

PT shared headline feedback as per the briefing document which was sent out prior to the JNCC.

Facilitation Pool

PT advised that the Learning and Development team was setting up a Facilitation Pool (similar to the Coaching and Mediation pools) so that departments or faculties can use the services of an independent facilitator where appropriate.

Any Other Business

JDG paid tribute to the contribution David Duncan had made at the JNCC and to the University. JDG described DJD as a tough person to deal with but one who is open, humorous and engaged in the joint work that has been done by union colleagues and management.

DJD thanked the JNCC members and said he had always found his work with the unions positive and productive.

11. Agenda Item 11 – Date of Next JNCC Meeting

16 May 2017 at 2.00pm in H/G19

12. Agenda Item 12 – Dates of future JNCC meetings

31st October 2017 at 2.00pm in H/G17

6th February 2018 at 2.00pm in H/G17

15th May 2018 at 2.00pm in H/G17