

Joint University/UCU Committee

22/10 A meeting of the Joint University/UCU Committee was held on Wednesday 18 May 2022 at 10.30 remotely, via Microsoft Teams.

Present:

Sally Pellow, President of Reading UCU [Chair]
Dr Ian Bland, UCU Representative
Dr David Field, UCU Representative
Moray McAulay, UCU Regional Official
Claire Rolstone, Interim

neeting held on 1 February 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

22/12 Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

Minute 22/05 Report of the President of Reading UCU

It was confirmed that the Vice Chancellor had responded by the deadline to the proposals submitted by UCU in relation to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) dispute.

22/13 Report of the Vice Chancellor

The Committee received the Vice Chancellor's February report to Senate. In addition, the following was noted:

- The recent appointment of Paul Lindley OBE as the new Chancellor for the University.
- Developments in relation to Thames Valley Science Park were proceeding well, with interest from a significant number of organisations. The National History Museum would shortly be announcing its intention to open a new facility at TVSP, which it was hoped would provide opportunities for collaboration, potentially in areas such as climate change, for example.

The following comments in response to the Vice Chancellor's report were noted in particular:

- The President of Reading UCU noted the recent government response to the Augar report, including:
 - Changes to student loans (including extending the length of years for repayment). The President of Reading UCU highlighted that it would be important to recognise what this meant for students (noting greater implications for students who would be on the lower end of the pay scale) and to consider how best to support them, both during their time at University and also in terms of obtaining the best possible job afterwards. It was commented that it was also disappointing that maintenance grants had



- not been reinstated, despite the recommendation to do so. UCU recognised how beneficial the Campus Jobs scheme was for students.
- A freezing of tuition fees for the next three years. The Vice Chancellor advised that this was effectively a



- which had also been reflected in conversations with members. UCU acknowledged that the University was already working on a number of associated areas (such as workloads etc.) but considered that there was more work still to be done. Another aspect also influencing this demoralisation was suggested to be the rise in inflation; it was confirmed that UCU had their own hardship fund as well as a fund to support those on strike action.
- UCU had been receiving queries in relation to returning to work and there
 appeared to be a lack of understanding regarding the difference between flexible
 and smart working, and the balance between home and office-based working. The
 Interim Director of HR advised that a review of smart working arrangements would
 be undertaken and they were keen to receive feedback from both staff and
 managers. It was clarified that the amount of time spent on campus was roledependant and, while this was being addressed within aniedhe ai8



Action: President of Reading UCU

Items brought forward by the University

This item was covered elsewhere in the meeting.

Items brought forward by Reading UCU

This item was covered elsewhere in the meeting.

Routine items

22/16 Matters from the Staffing Committee

The Committee received a report from the most recent Staffing Committee, held in February. The following comments were noted in relation to this:

UCU commented that they would expect to be involved in a number of the discussions which had taken place at the last Staffing Committee and queried why UCU was not represented there. The Vice Chancellor clarified that Staffing Committee was a purely advisory committee; however, they agreed to discuss with the Chief Strategy Officer & University Secretary whether it would be beneficial for UCU representation to be included on the membership.

Action: Vice Chancellor

• UCU expressed their willingness to participate in further discussions regarding recruitment challenges, including the use of marketing supplements and other potenti hi