

**OPEN UNIVERSITY BRANCH
OF THE UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD 13 DECEMBER 2007**

Present: Roger Walters (Chair), Meridian (Minutes), John Bennett, Chris Bollom, Alan Carr, Alan Carter, Pauline Collins, Malcolm Jenner, Lesley Kane, David Knowles, Peter Lee, Mike McNulty, Jon Pike

Apologies: Rob Clifton, Maria Francis-Pitfield, Cicely Havelly, Anne McKee, Bethan Norfor, John Peters, Peter Piper, Roger Rees, Cheryl-Ann Vass, Eric Wade

In attendance: Barry Johnson

1 INTRODUCTIONS

The President welcomed new members, and all members briefly introduced themselves.

Barry informed us that he is an Assistant General Secretary for UCU, and is based in the Birmingham regional office. He acts as liaison between HQ and the regional branches: Cranfield University, The Open University, Oxford University, and the University of Buckinghamshire (a private concern).

2 MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 The elections of the 2007–2008 Executive Committee members were started under the old Rules: under these Rules the posts Assistant Secretary (Academic) and Assistant Secretary (Academic Related) were vacant. No candidate stood for the post of AS (Academic). Chris Bollom was elected unopposed to the post of AS (Academic Related).
- 2.2 During the elections, new Rules came into force. Under these Rules the Assistant Secretary roles are defunct, and replaced with the following:
- a. Central academic staff officer
 - b. Central academic-related staff officer
 - c. Regional academic staff officer
 - d. Regional academic-related staff officer
- 2.3 The Executive Committee **confirmed** that for this term of office Chris Bollom will fulfil the role of both Central and Regional Academic-Related) Staff Officer.
- 2.4 It was **confirmed** that the following posts are vacant, and are to be filled via an election process:
- a. Central academic staff officer
 - b. Regional academic staff officer, and
 - c. Equality Officer

M / RW

3 MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS

Noted: the Minutes of the EC meeting of 29 November and the AGM, with thanks to Alan Carter for producing these.

M

4 MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 Return to work of the Office Manager (item 2a)
This is ongoing.
- 4.2 Pay days (item 3b)
Agreement has been reached.

M

<p>4.3 <u>Job grading of AcRel staff (item 3d)</u> Alan Carr is rewriting procedures for regrading, at management's request.</p>	A.CARR
<p>4.4 <u>Extensions of sick pay (item 3.g)</u> Laurie Shine is drawing up a draft code of conduct for Alan Carr to review. If this appears uncontroversial, he will circulate it to the EC.</p>	A.CARR
<p>4.5 <u>AL Reps Committee questionnaire (item 4.3)</u> This has been tested on six ALs. A couple of questions need minor modifications, but feedback has been positive. Initially the survey will be sent only to AL OUBUCU members. It was agreed that we will pay the approx. £100 fee to join Survey Monkey, which will enable us to process this, and possible future surveys, including analysis.</p>	LK
<p>4.6 <u>Online Forum (item 5.1)</u> This will launch in 2008. David will provide a Code of Conduct. Moderators need not be from the EC, and will work in pairs for two weeks at a time.</p>	DK / LK
<p>4.7 <u>Snowball Article by Nigel Holt (item 6.1)</u> This was incorrect; David will write to Nigel.</p>	DK
<p>5 ACTION POINTS FROM AGM</p>	
<p>5.1 <u>Publication of Agendas and Minutes of Exec meetings and AGMs/EGMs (item 1.1)</u> These will be published on the OUBUCU website in a timely fashion. While the Exec's position is that all information should be available to members, it should be noted that: No Minute will be published regarding the agreed position in regard to ongoing negotiations with management. At times, it may be necessary to mention individuals by name: under Data Protection law they have the right not to be identified in the written Minute. Minutes of Exec meetings will only be published after approval by the next Exec meeting, when decisions on confidentiality of items will be made.</p>	M
<p>5.2 <u>Emergency Motions (see Appendices for wording)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>EM1: Membership lists</u>: David is working on updating these, and he will circulate relevant lists to regional reps, with a letter from Roger as to why they are receiving the lists and the relevant Data Protection rules for their use. It should be noted that i) some ALs will be out-of-region, and ii) regional members of staff who are not ALs will be on the regional list. b. <u>EM2: Health & Safety Committee Reps</u>: Roger is following this up. c. <u>EM3 not passed</u> d. <u>EM4: ALCR discussion</u>: Roger will follow this up. e. <u>EM5: SSR</u>: to be discussed at the Exec. AwayDay in February. 	DK RW RW
<p>6 PRESIDENT'S REPORT</p>	
<p>On behalf of OUBUCU, Roger expressed condolences to Philip Marsh, former head of Human Resources, on the recent loss of his partner. Roger will be having regular meetings with Nigel Holt, the new Director of HR. Roger asks that should any Exec member contact Nigel, he is cc'd. Barry Johnson was brought in to deal with a very difficult personal case.</p>	
<p>8 HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT</p>	
<p>Data protection regulations require that all members of the Exec, Regional Reps, and other nominated officer-type post holders agree to their names and contact details being</p>	M

made public on the website, and appearing in the Minutes. Meridian will contact individuals re this.

9 TREASURERS REPORT

- 9.1 There is £150,000 on deposit with HSBC, and a review of where to next invest it is required. It is **agreed** that this deposit should be rolled over for three months until a review can take place. This review will be undertaken by Alan Carr as National Treasurer.
- 9.2 Signatories on the HSBC and Unity Trust accounts were **agreed** as the President, Roger Walters; the Honorary Secretary, Meridian; the Treasurer, David Knowles; and the Office Manager.

DK /
A.CARR

10 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

10.1 JNC

President, Hon Sec, Treasurer, Alan Carr.

Should a member not be available, it was suggested that John Bennett be the main substitute if necessary, for continuity of negotiation from last year.

An alternate can attend at any time, to give expertise in an area – all Exec members are eligible.

Advisors are able to attend at any time.

As a development measure, it would be useful for observers to be permitted on a regular basis: Roger will check with management.

Roger will ask for Agendas, papers, etc to be forwarded in a timely manner to enable Exec discussion prior to meetings.

RW

RW

10.2 AL Issues Working Group

Pauline Collins , Lesley Kane, Mike McNulty

The possibility of observers should be explored; David and John Peters are experienced negotiators.

This group originally had 4 members for each side – returning to this numbers should be explored with management. The new member could be the President, or an internal staff member, to signal to ALs that central staff support their issues.

RW

10.3 Exec Committee sub-group on AL role

A group should be created, to include those from JNC, ALIWG, and John Peters, to concentrate particularly on the impacts of the SSR, and the AL role review, to give the lead in the negotiating process.

RW

10.4 Health & Safety Committee

Currently, we have one person on this committee, Simon Carter. We should investigate the possibility of having two members, to give an on-site and off-site viewpoint: meantime, Simon and Lesley Kane should alternate.

We should also find out the names of the members of the working group who meet between the H&S Committee meetings.

RW / LK

11 **JNCHES** (*Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher education Staff*)

There are funds available for the OU to use to fund a joint management/union workshop to explore ways of working together more effectively. An OU/OUBUCU/UNISON workshop is planned for 11 February, facilitated by ACAS. Members of the JNC, and one member of ALIWG should attend.

RW

12 **AL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

The outcomes of a meeting in early February will be discussed by AL regional reps, who will forward outcomes to ALIWG for JNC. Comments should go to Lesley. Of particular concern is the rolled-up holiday pay – ALIWG needs strong leadership from the Exec on this, perhaps with legal advice.

LK

Lesley will liaise with Barry.

13 PERSONAL CASES

- a. We need to expand the number of people trained to undertake personal casework. Alan Carter is drawing up a list of those who are trained, those who historically have undertaken casework but are not trained, and those who wish to be trained (or retrained). Caseworkers should be members or past members of the Exec if possible. If you are interested, email Alan.
- b. Barry will run training/s.
- c. The allocation of personal casework needs to be reviewed.
- d. Alan will send an email to the Exec re this.

A.CARTER

14 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Roger Rees will research this issue, and lead a discussion at the AwayDay.

RR

15 ELQs

The importance of this requires the branch be very active. Roger will lead.

We will continue to work closely with management on this, and use the issue to raise our profile amongst members and non-members.

Roger's first action will be to question John Denham at the meeting this afternoon.

RW

16 AWAYDAY

This has been set for the 22 & 23 February,
starting/finishing approx. 5pm, Friday/Saturday.
More details to follow.

17 DATES OF NEXT MEETING

January, Tuesday 22, Castlethorpe room, Hilton Hotel, Kents Hill Park, MK, 11am start

February, Fri/Sat 22/23, Awayday, Castlethorpe room, Hilton Hotel, Kents Hill Park, MK

March, Monday 17, Michael Young Bldg, Room 1, 11am start

18 INVITATIONS TO GUESTS

It was **agreed** that Barry has a standing invitation to OUBUCU Exec and General meetings.

Other guests will be agreed on a case-by-case basis.

OUBUCU Executive List for 2007 / 2008

Officers:

President	Roger Walters	_____
Vice President	Alan Carter	_____
Vice President	Mike McNulty	_____
Honorary Secretary	Meridian	_____
Honorary Treasurer	David Knowles	_____
Equality Officer	<i>vacant</i>	_____
Central Academic Staff Officer	<i>vacant</i>	_____
Associate Lecturers Officer	Lesley Kane**	_____
Regional Academic Staff Officer	<i>vacant</i>	_____
Central & Regional Academic-Related Staff Officer	Chris Bollom*	_____

Ordinary Members:

Pauline Collins	_____
Maria Francis-Pitfield	_____
Cicely Havelly	_____
Malcolm Jenner	_____
Anne McKee	_____
Bethan Norfor	_____
John Peters	_____
Jon Pike	_____
Peter Piper	_____
Roger Rees	_____
Cheryl-Anne Vass	_____
Eric Wade	_____

Ex-Officio Members:

Past President	John Bennett	_____
National Treasurer	Alan Carr	_____
National Executive	Rob Clifton	_____

By Invitation:

NUJ FoC	Peter Lee	_____
UCU Regional Official	Barry Johnson	_____

* Chris Bollom was elected under the previous Rules, as Assistant Secretary (Academic Related), and confirmed in post as both the Central and Regional Academic-Related Staff Officer at the Executive Meeting of 13 December 2007.

** Lesley Kane was elected under the previous Rules as Assistant Secretary (Associate Lecturers) – her title has changed to reflect the name of the post under the new Rules.

Emergency Motion 1 - PASSED

This AGM notes that 2007 was the first time in several years that AL regional reps were not provided with a list of their regional members and email addresses.

Several AL regional representatives have highlighted the difficulty of representing members and seeking to involve them in the union due to being unable to contact them.

We also note advice from HQ that providing the contact details are used for union business it does not contravene the Data Protection Act to if AL regional representatives are provided with a list of their regional members and their email addresses.

This AGM therefore instructs the branch officers to issue the AL regional reps who are elected this year with a list of their regional members, and the email addresses of those who have not opted out of receiving emails from the union, along with appropriate guidelines for their use.

Proposed: Peter Piper Seconded: Pauline Collins

Emergency Motion 2 - PASSED

This AGM believes that having just one representative on the OU's Health and Safety committee is not enough for a branch such as OUBUCU with approximately 2000 members.

We also note that having only one representative necessitates a choice between either having our MK-based members or having our non-MK-based members directly represented on the H&S committee.

We also note that the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 specify that the number of management representatives on H&S committees should not exceed the number of employees' representatives

We ask the OUBUCU executive committee and branch officers to seek to improve our representation on the OU's H&S committee via discussions with management and if necessary with the other unions involved, and in the meantime to alternate our representation on the OU's H&S committee between a campus-based H&S representative and an off-campus H&S representative.

Proposed: Lesley Kane Seconded: David Knowles

Emergency Motion 3 – NOT PASSED

The Open University Colleges Union is dismayed at the action of the UCU executive in cancelling the invitation to the Palestinian Academic Trades Union delegation to regional meetings to explain their reasons for calling for a boycott of Israeli universities. The Union was instructed to issue this invitation as part of an agreed debate on the issue of the boycott in resolution 30 at this year's UCU congress, passed by a two thirds' majority.

The OU UCU is also dismayed at the simultaneous cancellation of regional meetings to discuss a possible boycott of Israel universities as demanded in resolution 30. Regardless of the position individual members at present hold on the boycott, the OU UCU is alarmed that the debate about the boycott has been stifled in our union.

We demand that the legal opinion that prompted this action be published to the membership together with the questions on which the lawyers were asked to advise so that UCU members can assess the validity of this ruling, which could mean the suppression of any and every type of Trade Union solidarity action both nationally and internationally.

Proposed by Paula James, Seconded by Andrew Trigg

Emergency Motion 4 - PASSED

This general meeting considers the ban on all discussion of union related matters in the ALCR to be contrary to the principles on which the OU was founded, in contradiction with DTI guidelines and European agreements on the rights of teleworkers, and contrary to the spirit of the Human Rights Act and the Education Act.

In particular we note that:-

(a) It is not normal practice to ban discussion of union matters in staff common rooms just because union members are a minority of the staff concerned.

(b) Nor is it normal practice to ban discussion of union matters in common rooms that serve only a section of the staff in an organisation. This is also likely to become less relevant since the OU is opening the ALCR to a wider range of staff.

(c) That threads of discussion on union matters are not the only threads in which problematic postings have ever been made, and that it is normally the individual postings that are dealt with or removed.

We therefore call upon the OU to review its policy with regard to the discussion of union-related topics in the ALCR.

Proposed: Lesley Kane Seconded: Richard Dillon, Phillip Escott, Dave McIntyre

Emergency Motion 5 – PASSED

The OUBUCU notes with concern the large-scale AL job losses that will result from many of the Student Support Review (SSR) models and the SSR's 'general directions of travel'. It also notes with concern that considerable changes in job descriptions will occur if the SSR is adopted.

This branch will accept no compulsory redundancies and no arbitrary changes in job descriptions arising from implementation of the SSR,

This AGM instructs the OUBUCU Executive to vigorously campaign amongst members about the SSR and to seek guarantees from the OU management that there will be no enforced job losses and/or imposed detrimental changes to the job roles arising from the SSR.

Proposed: John James

Seconded: Lesley Kane