

**OPEN UNIVERSITY BRANCH  
OF THE UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION  
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD 22 JANUARY 2008**

Present: Roger Walters (Chair), Chris Bollom (Minutes), Alan Carter, Mike McNulty, David Knowles, Lesley Kane, Pauline Collins, Maria Francis-Pitfield, Cicely Havely, Malcolm Jenner, Bethan Norfor, Jon Pike, Peter Piper, Roger Rees, Eric Wade, John Bennett, Alan Carr

Apologies: Meridian, Anne McKee, John Peters, Cheryl-Anne Vass

**1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 13/12/07**

1.1 Agreed: The agreed minutes can be published on the website.

**2 Matters Arising:**

2.1 Job Grading of Academic Related Staff (item 4.3)  
This is work in progress. Another face-to-face meeting will be required. It was originally agreed that regrading would involve a meeting of an H.R. representative, the Head of Department, and an UCU representative. Since then HR has pushed for a full HERA analysis. This was unacceptable.

2.2 Extensions of sick pay (item 4.4)  
Criteria for this have been agreed except on work-related stress. This was unacceptable and the branch would continue to press for similar treatment.

**3 President's Report:**

3.1 Reported: (item 2.4)  
Matters are in hand for an election for the posts of Central Academic Staff Officer, Regional Academic Staff Officer and Equality Officer. The branch agreed to appoint Catherine Wilkinson of UCU as Returning Officer.

There were originally seven nominations of candidates for Congress delegates. there was only provision for five delegates though others could attend as observers and so some candidates might withdraw. Roger was progressing this.

3.2 Reported: (item 5.2.b)  
A proposal that UCU could have two representatives on the Health and Safety Committee would be formally put to the next meeting of that committee, which Lesley Kane would attend in accordance with the alternating arrangements.

3.3 Reported: (item 5.2.d)  
A review of the ban on union matters being discussed on the ALCR had been requested.

3.4 Reported: (item 10.1)  
The opportunity for observers to attend the JNC has been agreed in principle.

3.5 Reported: (item 10.2)  
The question of increased membership of the Associate Lecturers Issues Working Group has still to be pursued.

3.6 Reported: (item 15)  
The ELQ issue moves on apace. Alan Carr and Roger met Bill Rammell before Christmas. There seems to be no retreat from principle but some amelioration, but indicated this will not be as much as the OU had hoped for.

Select Committee hearings have taken place and the joint front of Sally Hunt, the VC, Birkbeck and the NUS has proved solid. The campaign must continue.

- 3.7 Reported: Roger had recently attended an UCU higher education briefing in London. We are not affected by the Government's recent 2% public sector pay limit so will get 3% in May and 2.5% or RPI, whichever is greater, in October. But membership density is declining and this needed to be addressed.
- 3.8 Reported: Roger had written to Open House correcting the notion that there had ever been plans for a boycott of Israeli Universities. The plans were for a discussion of such a boycott, but these plans had now been dropped on legal advice.

#### **4 Honorary Secretary's Report:**

- 4.1 Reported: The situation regarding the Office Manager is still ongoing, and a meeting was planned for February 7.
- 4.2 Reported: The new local Branch Rules are on the website.
- 4.3 Reported: The Executive agreed a proposed schedule for meetings in 2008, except the next General Meeting would have to be brought forward, probably to March 17 or 18, in order to be in time to submit motions to Congress.

#### **5. Treasurer's Report:**

- 5.1 Reported: £150,000 is on deposit with HSBC. New signatories on the account have been organised. The electronic transfer facility needs to be re-established.
- 5.2 Reported: David had written to the Director of HR about his statements in Snowball which suggested a legal requirement for the university's staff age profile to match the student age profile.
- 5.3 Reported: David is tidying up the membership lists and trying to reconcile them with the national lists. This is proving hard work. The AL e-mail list is more or less finished.

#### **6. Group Reports:**

Associate Lecturer Issues:

Received: Lesley's draft minutes of the AL Regional Reps Committee on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

There were a number of issues:

- i) Roger had sought an assurance that there would be no change in the use of information from DALs in the light of reports about it being used for performance management.
- ii) Malcolm Jenner agreed to take on SurveyMonkey issues.
- iii) The online forum would be launched shortly.
- iv) ICT Workstations – what are the consequences for insurance and H & S if other family members use it?

**7. JNC Issues:**

- 7.1 Reported: The following issues will be discussed:
- i) CDSA
  - ii) ELQ
  - iii) AL issues
  - iv) Salary payment dates when the 25<sup>th</sup> does not fall on a weekday. A no-detriment reassurance will be requested.
  - v) Salary sacrifice – “Pension Smart”. Information is required.
  - vi) We had asked for a review of the Facility Agreement to be on the agenda, but it is not.

**8. Branch Newsletter:**

- 8.1 Reported: This is overdue. Roger and Meridian will put a draft together on her return and circulate. If Executive members have issues please let them know.

**9. Personal Casework:**

- 9.1 Reported: Barry Johnson will be holding a training session on February 27, and this will be followed by the Away Day – details to follow. Thanks to Alan Carter for organizing. Casework management will be on the agenda for the AwayDay.

**10. Negotiating Structure Proposals:**

- 10.1 Reported: The ballot on single table bargaining and dispute resolution processes will be held shortly. It would be helpful if the Executive could make a recommendation to the General Meeting tomorrow.  
The policy of the branch has always been to oppose single table bargaining and indeed Alan Carr wrote the case against it which is included in the ballot papers. Single table bargaining – which *de facto* we have had for the last six years – will prevent “catch up” and disadvantage stand-out groups such as Academic Related and Fixed Term staff, and will prevent meaningful industrial action.
- 10.2 Agreed: A unanimous recommendation from the Executive for a no vote.

**11. Awayday:**

- 11.1 Reported: This will be on 22-23 February. Roger and Meridian will provide an agenda after consultation.

**12. Expenses for General Meeting Attendance:**

- 12.1 Agreed: To meet expenses of AL Representatives and Executive Committee members not on site for attending General Meetings, subject to this being reviewed if and when a system for remote participation in meetings was in place.

**13. N.E.C. Elections:**

- 13.1 Agreed: To encourage branch members to support those members of the branch who were candidates, ie Roger Walters, Pauline Collins, Lesley Kane and Jon Pike.

**14. Any Other Business:**

- i) Bethan is studying a course part of which involves “Your company/organization and the Union role”.
- ii) We need to be alert to management’s increasing tendency to problematize policies and procedures they have agreed with us in the past.
- iii) A reminder to the member ship of Executive Working Groups, including those on AL redundancy and on remote participation should be reviewed prior to the November 2007 election:
  - Redundancy WG – Lesley, Barbara Segal, Pauline and Mike.
  - Remote Participation WG – Alan Carter.
- iv) Some procedural irregularities have been reported in Associate Dean appointments. This should be raised at the JNC.

**15. Date of Next Meeting:**

- 15.1 Noted: This will be held on Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, at 11.00 a.m. in Room 1 of the Michael Young Building, to be followed by a General Meeting in the Berrill Lecture Theatre at 12.30 p.m.