**Minutes of Branch Committee : 26th August, 2014.**

**Present:** Ian Ellis (chair)

Mona Clark (assistant secretary)

Sam Crouch

Gair Dunlop

Rosa Michaelson

Marion Sporing

Gregor Wallace

**Apologies:** John Drummond

Mari-Cruz Garcia

Angela Roger

Sharon Sweeney

**223.1** The Minutes of the last meeting (5th August) were accepted as a true record.

**223.2** Matters arising: there were none that were not a substantive item on the Agenda

**223.3** The figures on the take-up of the VS scheme, as given to the Collective Consultation committee on 21st August were as follows: 48 approved, 15 still being considered, 24 rejected, of which some are going to appeal. It is possible that the number of staff required to go by the CMND/CLS Project may be reached without any compulsory redundancies. Court on September 11th will be discussing the state of play, after an assessment of how the present VS scheme had gone . It is thought that any further rounds of academic staff cuts will be centred around ‘under-funded research’, although there is no word of where and how this will be organized.

**223.4** It was agreed to send a letter to Court from DUCU with a copy of information DUCU gains from asking feedback from those who went through the recent process. Staff will be invited to respond to questions such as the fairness, transparency, unconscious bias, and the adhering to University policies and processes. This to be tabled at the next JNC to support a request for proper training of all those involved in interviewing for whatever reason.

**223.5** The above letter to Court would also go on the DUCU blog,

**223.6** There appears to have been a number of anomalies and inconsistencies in the treatment of individual gradings during the Project process in CMND and CLS. This refers to questions of identical posts being placed on different grades, whether or not a post should be red-circled and where there could be equal pay issues. Plus there was some evidence that individuals were negotiating particular terms only to find them being withdrawn. It was agreed to ask HR for an anonymised spreadsheet of strain costs and an equality assessment to be provided, in order to be able to put questions to the next LJC (26th September) and to Academic Council.

**223.7** It was noted that UCU Scotland is leading a big campaign to prevent zero hour contracts being used by employers. As yet there are none at the University, but any move in this direction will be strongly resisted. Noted by EIS Branch at Edinburgh Napier University that zero hour contracts have already been advertised there.

**223.8**  UNISON members in Dundee Dental School have requested a meeting with HR over health and safety issues within the School. As yet

**223.9** It was agreed that the Secretary to the JNC should be someone who is outside the issues being discussed in an LJC. That is, if a particular College or School is being referred to, the Secretary should not be a member of that School or College. This point to be made to HR at the next Collective Consultation meeting (September 26th)

**223.10** There will be fewer members on the Branch Committee as a consequence of some taking up VS . The impact will be most felt where caseworkers are lost. Two possible new caseworkers’ names were put forward , and these will be followed up. Other possible activists are being sought.

**223.11** A joint Dundee/Abertay meeting is to be organized to discuss issue surrounding the independence . This will take place at Abertay University on Monday September 15th. A YES and a NO speaker will be provided by each University. Members will be asked if anyone is prepared to undertake that task.

**223.12** It was agreed that at the next JNC an item for the agenda should be the procedures for ensuring equality and diversities should be emphasized to line managers, and that senior management involved in assessing staff for various roles or positions should have proper and compulsory training for their roles.

**223.13** The appeal report on the procedures followed in the BAcc collective grievance has now been presented to the individuals concerned and to DUCU. It was with great pleasure that DUCU noted that the great majority of the staff’s complaints had been upheld, and that line managers had not dealt appropriately with many of the issues referred to. It was suggested that the key issues should go to the JNC to be discussed, and if the report was also forwarded to Court, then it would be in the ‘public domain ‘ and could be forwarded in some form to all members.

**223.14**  Marion Sporing has been conducting a health and safety survey in the Dental School  on request by UNISON . There are also Dignity at Work issues in the School which could require action by HR and DUCU.

**223.15** The Health and Safety Committee is now to have fortnightly meetings. It was agreed that there should be dedicated advisors for all Colleges, and this could mean a role which would take up one day a week. This would need to be discussed with HR as it could mean a considerable amount of one’s time.

**223.16** It has been reported that Professor Connell (CMND) has been asking academic staff to be at their desks from 9 am – 5 pm**.** Many members state that that is not necessary for them to be fulfilling their work commitments, quoting the situation where academic staff presently work from home on their research aspart of their time. The figure of 40 hours a week has been put about by HR as the norm for performing their duties, although this figure has never been agreed to by DUCU, as the national UCU norm is 35 hours a week.

**223.17 A.O.C.B.**

**223.17.1** It was agreed to put £200 towards buying an almost-new laptop for the Assistant Secretary. The present one has been in use since 2009 and is virtually worn out and not capable of using the most up-to-date programmes.

**223.17.2** It was agreed to hold the next Branch meeting on Thursday 25th September, partly to discuss any issues or problems for higher education in Scotland as a result of the referendum vote.

Mona Clark,

17th September, 2014