**Emergency Branch Meeting: 11th February, 2015 (followed by a Campaign meeting.)**

**Present:** Ian Ellis (President)

Carlo Morelli (Vice-President)

Janice Aitken (Secretary)

Mona Clark (Assistant Secretary)

Louise McGurk (UCU Scotland regional officer)

16 members

**Apologies:** There were 3 formal apologies

1. **Motion to special HEC conference.**

The emergency meeting was called to discuss a motion which is proposed to be submitted to the special HEC meeting on 24th February with regard to the USS/UCU resolution of the pensions issue. It is claimed that the decisions which resulted from these discussions are flawed in three elements. These are:

1. Lack of accountability and democracy, and unrepresentative of a number of members’ views.
2. The consequences of a shift to a ‘defined contributions pension’ had not been explained, let alone agreed to by most of those affected.
3. UCU is now no longer a ‘member-led ‘ union and thus a vote of no confidence the present executive should be sought, which would require that they all resigned their posts.

It was argued that the recent negotiations had led to a much better outcome for USS members and thus further action , in the form of a special conference , was not required, as as any new decisions would be too late to implement. However this was refuted and it was pointed out that under the 60 day consultation process, there was enough time to reflect on possible improvements to the outcome of the negotiations. It was stated that any mistakes made were not made by the negotiators, and thus they should not be blamed.

The motion referred to is at the end of this note. It has to be submitted by 12th February. It was carried by a vote of 12 for, 3 against and 1 abstention. However as the meeting was inquorate (25 members being the quorum) the motion was withdrawn.

1. **Future industrial action: campaign thoughts**

The options are strike action and action short of a strike (ASOS) It was noted that those involved in the previous ASOS had in many cases been subject to a 100% pay reduction, despite the questionable legality of such action. It was generally agreed that industrial action, of whatever type, created financial problems for many members, but it was also accepted that the likelihood of industrial action being called for in the near future and thus contingency plans should be prepared.

Discussion followed on how to encourage members to take part in further industrial action, which would almost certainly follow from management’s attempts to achieve the loss of staff they stated was needed because of the University’s financial state. A new VS scheme has been introduced as ‘targeted VS’, which seemed to be a contradiction in terms. The phrase ‘enhanced redundancy’ appeared to be another use of words aiming to ‘sweeten the pill.’ There was a strong advocacy from the audience that management should be pressured through direct and forceful action such as an all-out strike

It was agreed that authority from members should be sought for an initial boycott of requests to complete official forms such as the ASOS. As this is not a contractual issue, there would be no loss of money for those taking part, and DUCU support for members will always be there.

To this end, a consultative ballot of DUCU members will be undertaken as soon as possible in order to assess the support for ASOS, and a formal ballot will follow that if it is the general view of members. This to be set up by UCU Scotland. It is hoped that the consultative ballot could take place in the following week (week starting 16th February) and be open for one week to members. The support of DUSA MPs, MSPs, and the media, will be sought for any industrial action sought to protect members’ jobs in the University.

Mona Clark,

Assistant Secretary

**Motion: Conduct of negotiators and HEC (USS Branches)**

*Conference believes the UCU negotiators failed to follow a democratically determined strategy for negotiations on pensions. UCU has never accepted a defined contribution pension scheme and its secret negotiation was outwith the remit of the negotiators. Conference therefore no longer had confidence in our negotiators and calls on them to resign.*