

... and related

The newsletter for academic related, professional staff in higher education

Annual meeting for academic related, professional staff 2019

On a sunny Valentine's Thursday around 35 academic-related and professional staff from all over the country (from the South West right through to Scotland) congregated in the top-floor meeting room at Carlow Street for what would turn out to be an interesting and thought-provoking day of discussion, networking and, most importantly, electing and policy-making. This was particularly important as the Academic Related, Professional Staff Committee had hit something of a snag the previous year.

Having *just* reached the quorum of delegates signed up to the 2017 annual meeting, only to be disappointed by a couple of no-shows on the day, the committee was pleased to get significantly more sign up for the 2018 meeting, only for *the Beast from the East* to see many of them get stuck in snowdrifts and not make it to the meeting. This second inquorate meeting not only prevented policy from being made, but also left the Academic Related, Professional Staff Committee without any members. This meant there was no committee, hence no meetings, and no motions to or representations at congress.

It was therefore particularly pleasing to see such a good turnout to this year's meeting. Delegates were welcomed by Jenny Lennox, committee secretary and UCU Bargaining and Negotiations Official, and brought up-to-date on current events by UCU President Vicky Knight. President elect Douglas Chalmers also updated delegates on the pension dispute before UCU research officer Rachel Remedios gave a presentation on the ARPS staff survey carried out in 2017 and the smaller one in January 2019, which led to a discussion on representation of ARPS staff at institutions other than pre-92 universities and across different disciplines. Before the lunch break the discussion widened and delegates heard with interest – and in some cases

horror – about situations in particular institutions.

After lunch the formal business was carried out, including electing four nominees onto the committee. The intention to co-opt up to four more members was announced and expressions of interest sought (some had already been received). The University of Leeds had submitted three motions for debate, on: supporting student counselling services; enquiring after the report into the effect of hubs and 'service' centralisation coming out of last year's HEC motion HE21; and on damaging changes to IT services. A lively discussion ensued and the motions were all passed. Finally delegates split into groups to discuss tasks and priorities for the newly-elected committee, and some interesting ideas were presented in the summing-up session at the end.

After two inquorate annual meetings and a year without a committee it was brilliant to see so many interested and engaged delegates and hear so many good ideas. The Academic Related, Professional Staff Committee is back, and ready for business!

Tim Barrett, University of Bath

Once and future chair of the ARPS committee!

21 Feb 2019

Motions to Congress 2019

Following on from the ARPS annual meeting, the committee met and discussed motions to submit to HE sector conference and to congress. The committee was keen to follow up on the issues raised at the annual meeting and therefore agreed to submit the following motions.

Love Our ARPS

Conference notes:

- the many and varied roles of Academic Related and Professional Staff, recognising the vital role ARPS play in our institutions and our union.

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- a significant percentage of the HE workforce occupy ARPS roles but this is not reflected in our membership figures.

Conference instructs HEC to launch a #LoveOurARPS campaign which:

- refreshes the ARPS manifesto for relaunch.
- produces recruitment and campaign materials which reflect the diversity of ARPS roles and emphasise ARPS are an integral part of the academic team.
- investigates institutional spending on ARPS CPD and establishes a model claim.
- develops and deploys a regular survey expanding our understanding of ARPS issues.
- facilitates greater inter-branch communication.
- investigates ARPS casualisation through FOI and other means.
- tables the ARPS role profiles as part of the UK HE claim and encourages branches to submit claims pursuing these.
- links to the Workload campaign.

Mental health services

Conference notes:

- increasing awareness of student and staff mental health needs.
- counselling services are vital to support staff and students.
- some universities are downgrading counsellors while adding workload to their roles.
- counselling staff are overloaded, demoralised and stressed.

Conference believes:

- student and staff mental health needs are best met by professional in-house counsellors rather than online provision.
- more counsellors are needed to handle increasing demand.
- counselling is a difficult job which management should respect.
- counselling staff should not be casualised, downgraded, or have their hours reduced.

Conference instructs HEC to:

- publicise the important and effective work done by student counsellors.
- campaign for better resourced counselling services, with better pay and conditions

Public Money Public Code Campaign

Congress notes:

- the tendency of institutions to centralise IT staff, closely followed by greater outsourcing/buying closed software solutions.
- this narrows the scope for up-skilling/professional development and gives management.
- the feeling that staff are a commodity resource, leading to deprofessionalisation of the workforce.
- the failure of some proprietary software in producing value for money to meet the sectors needs.

Congress notes:

- that this narrowing of offering to academic staff impacts on academic freedom, as the institution will push for their chosen platform or solution.
- this strategy leads to closed proprietary systems and vendor lock-in, and in the case of research increases the cost of reproducibility.

Congress resolves:

- that UCU sign the FSFE "public money public code" declaration;
- to work with the public money public code campaign for open software in education.

2019 – 2020 Academic Related, Professional Committee

Tim Barrett	Bath (Chair)
Jess Meacham	Sheffield (Vice Chair)
Ben Andrews	Wolverhampton
Vicky Blake	Leeds
Mesar Hameed	Bath
Derek Keenan	Strathclyde
Kamie Kitmitto	Manchester
Paul Siddall	Essex

The committee secretary is Jenny Lennox,
Bargaining and Negotiations Official
jlennox@ucu.org.uk

Introducing your new committee



(From left to right...)

Tim Barrett, Chair

I've been working in a computing role at the University of Bath for 19 years, and I've been a member for most of that time. I am Local Treasurer, a caseworker, and I've been on the ARPS committee since 2015, and more recently its chair.

I see first-hand the way that the roles of those delivering services get downgraded and their stress levels increased, along with the recruitment and retention problems caused by poor pay and a lack of progression.

The work of the ARPS committee is amongst the most important done by the union, and I hope I can continue to make a positive contribution to it.

Mesar Hameed

I am a Corporate Applications & Database Administrator working at the University of Bath.

I have been part of UCU since the start of my employment in 2013. Recently I have been part of the branch committee as a branch secretary jobshare. Getting ever more experience with union work as the union brings up issues with the university management team.

It is extremely important that as UCU ARPS members we raise issues that concerns us, as too often academic matters dominate discussions, but in fact they apply equally to us but in different forms.

Things that the ARPS Committee should work on are Continuing Professional Development, career progression, and job roles/profiles.

Vicky Blake

I moved into a full-time academic-related role in 2013, as a widening participation officer. I was finally made permanent a few years later, which felt like a relief – until! – I swiftly realised the extent of the issues with career progression for ARPS staff in the sector. Many ARPS staff are working at a level that should be recompensed way above the grade they're engaged upon and end up 'stuck' – all too often our professionalism is played down and disrespected. This is an important focus for ARPS committee and one I will also pursue during my time on the UCU presidential team.

Kamie Kitmitto

I first worked in academia as a postdoc in the University of Leicester working on Geographic Information Systems Training. Later I joined the University of Manchester as a national support officer, where we developed the first mapping system on the web back in 1996.

In 2000, I managed a project to create Mapping data using Satellite imagery and serving them on the web 6 years before the launch of Google Maps! Now I am Programme Manager of the Research Life Cycle at Manchester. <http://www.rlp.manchester.ac.uk>

I cannot remember how long ago I joined the Manchester University AUT but it was sometime in the late nineties. Pretty quickly I got involved in the committee as Equalities Officer. Some years later I was roped into becoming the Treasurer of the Local Association now it has become UMUCU. Later the pension portfolio was also added when the USS and management started their campaign to undermine our pensions. I started serving on the ARPS committee in 2014.

Jess Meacham, Vice Chair

I've been at the University of Sheffield since 2002, joined UCU as a PhD student more than a decade ago and have been on the branch committee at

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Sheffield since early 2017. Sheffield has a well-deserved reputation as a strong and active branch and I'm thrilled to now also be representing ARPS members, who constitute a significant - and often significantly under-estimated - part of both UCU's membership and the higher education workforce. I hope that the newly-elected committee will be able to deliver concrete improvements to members' conditions and raise the profile of our concerns across the union and will do everything I can to drive that work forward.

Paul Siddall

I started at Essex University in January 1993 and joined AUT (as it was then) in March.

I've been on the local committee since 1997 and since 2007 I have been the branch secretary at Essex. After attending many ARPS AGMs I joined the Committee in 2015. I was co-opted onto the Committee again this year.

My main reason for wanting to be on the Committee is to ensure that the views and concerns of ARPS staff are heard by UCU and to try to improve ARPS representation at Congress, etc; as well as to get the views of ARPS staff across the HE sector so that we can take their concerns forward.

Ben Andrews

I have been working in the university sector for 25 years across a range of roles: as an hourly paid lecturer, as a learning support adviser, and as an

educational developer for online learning.

I am the Branch Secretary of the Walsall Branch of the University of Wolverhampton UCU and Deputy Chair of the Negotiating Committee, which meets regularly with HR and the Offices of the Vice Chancellor.

I am keen to raise the profile of Academic Related members in the union.

Derek Keenan (who couldn't make the first meeting)

My main job is as a Study Skills Advisor at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, where I am the ARPS Rep.



I have worked in student support, in Further and Higher Education, since 1995. I have also had academic/teaching roles in both sectors and considerable experience of zero hour, temporary and fractional working. Presently I am working one part time, one zero hour and one guaranteed contract over three institutions.

I think the ARPS Committee has an important role as the voice of an often forgotten and marginalised part of the union and in also developing ways of making the UCU attractive to potential members in HE.

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Spread the message!

For hard copies of this newsletter or if you have any questions on ARPS matters; ideas for future articles; want to get more involved or talk about recruiting ARPS members contact us by e-mail: jlennox@ucu.org.uk

Please pass this newsletter on to other academic-related members or potential members.

If you have any questions or queries for the Committee please e-mail:

academicrelated@ucu.org.uk

Twitter: @UCU_ARPS

WHO ARE **ACADEMIC-RELATED STAFF**?

Academic related, professional staff work across all parts of higher education. We are professionals with expertise and experience in developing and delivering research, teaching and learning. We:

- build library collections
- advise students and potential students
- provide space for study and research
- make and purchase resources
- determine infrastructure
- advise on computing techniques
- negotiate with government and industry
- enforce health and safety
- ensure quality and plan for the future

We share the same interests as academic colleagues in uniting to defend higher education against de-professionalisation, pension cuts, redundancies, reduction of services and closures.

We will work with all parts of our union to build membership, and encourage active participation and representation of academic related, professional staff at all levels of the union. We:

- undertake casework and local negotiations
- support the administration and promotion of the branch
- are active members of UCU national committees
- send motions to Congress and contribute to UCU policy

We demand that our employers:

- recognise our expertise and professionalism which we provide in-house
- maintain the link between academic and academic-related staff terms and conditions and career progression
- recognise us on governing bodies
- examine staffing levels to address our excessive workloads

For more on the important role that we play, take a look at our Academic-related manifesto:

www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/d/b/ucu_acrelmanifesto.pdf