

## **University and College Union**

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<b>To</b>	Branch and local association secretaries
<b>Topic</b>	<b>unconfirmed minutes of the Academic Related, Professional Staff (ARPS) Annual Meeting held 17 March 2022</b>
<b>Action</b>	<b>for adoption; for approval</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>This circular provides the unconfirmed minutes of the Academic Related, Professional staff annual meeting held on Zoom, Thursday 17 March 2022 and will be adopted at the next quorate annual meeting</b>
<b>Contact</b>	Jenny Lennox, Committee Secretary; [Christine Bernabe (minutes)]

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## **Unconfirmed minutes**

An attendance list can be made available / attached

### **1 Introduction and Welcome**

- 1.1 Paulina Hoyos, Vice Chair assumed the role of Chair for this annual meeting and welcomed delegates who had joined the annual meeting on zoom. The meeting was called to order. Best wishes were sent to Fiona McGarry, Chair, who was unwell. Paulina asked to note that there were committee members whose term had ended and will no longer serve on the committee unless co-opted; Chloe Nast, Derek Keenan, Paul Siddall and herself.
- 1.2 The annual meeting was quorate following a head count which was needed to ensure that formal business could be taken.
- 1.3 Vicky Blake, UCU President was invited to address delegates. Vicky introduced herself and thanked Paulina for taking on the role of Chair at such short notice. The president welcomed all and stated that when members join UCU an awful lot of work is done with the range of skills that come onboard. There is an opportunity to be able to join the debates and help make the workplace better for everyone. The president took a moment to recognise staff at Goldsmiths faced with threats owing to redundancies as a result of restructure and the need to stand in solidarity with members as the dispute continues. There was a huge amount of work to be done and the president called for delegates to hear each other, work together so that voices could be heard on matters relating to workload and covid cases which were on the rise. In closing, the President stated that she was proud to be ARPS and to be a part of the Love Our ARPS campaign and extended solidarity to all delegates.
- 1.4 Paulina Hoyos, Chair, thanked the president for her words and explained how the

meeting would proceed. The next item on the agenda was the panel discussion on the topic 'the role of ARPS in the changing face of HE'. The Chair warmly welcomes the panel speakers and introductions followed: J Clarke, People & Planet; Pete Wood, Anti-Casualisation Committee and Open University; Chloe Nast, Goldsmiths and ARPS committee member. (It was noted that Lorna McNally, Research and Learning Support manager at Strathclyde University Library had sent her apologies).

### **Panel discussion**

- 1.5 J Clarke addressed the meeting on People & Planet and gave an overview about People & Planet and the Fossil free careers campaign. J Clarke shared the different ways in which the role of ARPS could support change in HE for climate justice and help to push the campaign forward. Delegates were encouraged to vote in support of the fossil free career motion at the annual meeting which would then be submitted to UCU Congress 2022.
- 1.6 Pete Wood spoke about how ARPS staff could work together to challenge casualisation and addressed a few key issues on the following; casualisation of ARPS which is increasing though it is difficult to review HESA data on this; the Four Fights; the Pension disputes which apply to all grades; climate change; precarity of contracts; varied nature of ARPS staff. Pete Wood also shared on what has worked well for the Anti Casualisation Committee. This included the ability to find a space on the branch network to be a bit more tactical and ways to feed into ASOS. Feedback had been obtained from conducting surveys using various media. Members had been asked what could be done in their jobs to make a difference and the responses were used to influence debate. Pete Wood also shared on the use of Teach Outs and hosting one hour evening events which kept Anti casualisation activists engaged.
- 1.7 Chloe Nast introduced herself to delegates and shared on the situation at Goldsmiths where members at the time of the annual meeting were currently on strike action. In 2019 a new scheme brought in by management 'Evolving Goldsmiths' in conjunction with KPMG met with strong opposition from the branch and led to a number of issues as a result such as the downgrading of roles, loss of staff expertise, overworked staff. UNISON has since joined in the dispute.
- 1.8 Following this, the Chair started the discussion and questions were put to the panel: whether there was any way of doing things differently to support strike action? What can UCU do with respect to the downgrading of ARPS roles? What does ASOS mean for non-academic staff? Panel members gave suggestions on Teach outs, building up networks between staff and students, showing support for Congress motions as well as focus on other key areas –such as case workers, local reps and collective action. Other points made during the discussion included de-professionalisation of professional staff, jobs being advertised at lower grades and lack of transparency. During the discussion a link was shared on ASOS advice given at Sussex which was thought would be helpful.
- 1.9 The discussion ended with closing remarks from panel members and information

for keeping in touch. A break followed.

## **2 Formal Business**

- 2.1 Following the break, the Chair welcomed back everyone and as the meeting was quorate, formal business was taken with the workshops sessions deferred to after lunch.

### **Unconfirmed minutes, previous annual meeting March 2020**

- 2.2 With no objections the minutes of the ARPS annual meeting 2021 were **adopted**.

### **Report on the work of the Academic Related Professional staff committee**

- 2.3 Jenny Lennox, Committee Secretary spoke briefly to a report of the work of the ARPS committee over the last year. Efforts were made to focus on the priorities identified at last year's annual meeting whilst still working within the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The committee had been busy with a number of events during the Love our ARPS campaign. They had supported activities including focus groups; the creation of an ARPS email discussion list; and drawing up branch guidance on organising staff. Other areas of work included FOI requests for a few pre-92 institutions and a submission to the ASOS sub-committee on how ARPS could better engage in ASOS with regards to the Pay and Pension disputes. It was hoped that today's workshop groups will provide further suggestions and feedback to the work of the committee.
- 2.4 The report was **received** and in response to a question about whether there had been a reply to the letter Jo Grady, UCU's general secretary had written to the universities minister, Jenny Lennox agreed to follow up on this and share any further information via the activists email discussion list.

### **Appointment of Tellers**

- 2.5 It was **noted** that Jenny Lennox and Sue Bajwa would act as tellers.

### **Elections to the Committee**

- 2.6 There were four vacancies to be filled for a term of two years on the committee, information had been circulated to delegates on this with other papers. Two nominations had been received: Chloe Nast, Goldsmiths and Lauren Sandford, University of Liverpool. Both nominations were **accepted** by delegates and Chloe and Lauren welcomed to the ARPS committee.
- 2.7 It was noted that co-options will be needed to fill in the other vacancies and follow up will be made regarding this.

## **3 Debate of motions**

- 3.1 Paulina Hoyos introduced the session on motions. Four motions had been submitted to the annual meeting.

**Motion 1 , HESA Data** was moved by Vicky Blake and seconded by Lauren Sandford and **carried unanimously**.

UCU notes that:

- academic-related staff work in diverse HE roles, collaborating with academic staff to develop and deliver research, teaching and learning.
- staff on non-academic contracts are approximately half the HE workforce.
- in 2019/20, OfS made it non-mandatory to provide data on staff on non-academic contracts to HESA in England & Northern Ireland.
- the coverage of HESA data could drop from near 100%, to 50% of the HE workforce.
- in 2019/20, 36 institutions didn't report any data for staff on non-academic contracts.

UCU believes that high quality data on the whole HE workforce is essential for improving pay and conditions for all members.

UCU resolves to:

- work with other stakeholders (UCEA, other unions) to lobby OfS to include all HE staff in the mandatory data collection.
- request data on non-academic staff from institutions that don't provide data on academic-related staff via HESA.

**Motion 2, Downgrading and casualisation** was moved by Amy Ryall and seconded by David Conway. Chloe Nast and Estelle Hart indicated support of the motion which was **carried unanimously**.

Meeting notes that:

- There are many instances of downgrading of academic-related and professional services posts as a result of restructures in our universities.
- The increasing number of fixed-term or contract posts for academic-related and professional services staff (c.1/3 of currently advertised posts on jobs.ac.uk are fixed term or contract).
- The gender and ethnicity pay gaps are worsened by the situation above at a time when we are trying to close them.

Meeting believes that:

- ARPS staff deserve appropriate remuneration and contracts for the contribution that they make to university business.
- Fixed-term and contract posts should only be used in exceptional circumstances.

Meeting resolves to:

- Work with the Anti-Casualisation Committee to learn from their campaigns and successes.

- Use existing data from the recent ARPS survey to assess the extent of the issue.
- Use this data (and collect more, if necessary) to produce materials to support branches tackling this issue locally.

**Motion 3, Careers Services: informing students and supporting the low carbon economy** was moved by Vicky Blake and seconded by Estelle Hart. Other speakers on the motion were Laura Gallon and Lauren Sandford. Lauren Sandford asked to put through an amendment. It was informed that amendments from the floor were not normally received however on this occasion would be taken. The amendment was proposed and **accepted**;

*Add new bullet point 3. To support the activities of the Green New Deal work and support the Green New Deal working group to promote activities in parallel and overlap where appropriate.*

Motion 3 was subsequently **carried as amended**.

ARPS notes:

- 1) Impartial, evidence-based advice offered by HEI careers services is valuable for students and wider society.
- 2) HEI careers services promoting roles in oil, gas and mining industries is likely contributing to the global climate crisis, and leading students into careers which will decline as we rapidly decarbonise our economies.
- 3) Congress 2017 passed a motion resolving to “work with members affected by a move to a low carbon economy, other trade unions, and environmentalists” to campaign for a Just Transition.

This ARPS resolves:

- 1) To actively work with People & Planet to publicly support the student-led Fossil Free Careers campaign, calling on university careers services to align their operations with sustainability considerations, particularly by declining to promote oil, gas and mining companies.
- 2) To produce a website statement about this motion and UCU support for this campaign and amplify the calls to action of it.
- 3) *To support the activities of the Green new deal work and support the Green new deal working group to promote activities in parallel and overlap where appropriate.*

(note: It was noted that the ARPS committee will take the motion forward as appropriate and ensure that it meets the word limit should this motion be submitted to Congress)

**Motion 4, Relationships with other unions** was moved by Vicky Blake and seconded by Alice Corble. Derek Keenan indicated support for the motion. Motion 4 was **carried unanimously**.

This meeting notes:

UCU ARPS members often work closely with members of other unions, e.g. Unison, and face many shared issues including:

- increasing, unsafe workloads
- casualisation
- pay inequality
- unequal opportunities for advancement
- workplace bullying
- pay deterioration
- downgrading of roles
- We are in the same fight for decency in our workplaces, but there are few formal structures beyond Joint Negotiating Committees, and varying degrees of communication, co-operation and co-ordination between unions. These risks contributing to division, where unity is needed.

This meeting agrees to:

- Encourage respectful collaboration between unions in Further and Higher Education at the national, the regional, devolved nation and local Branch levels
- Establish an ARPS-led UK Working Group to investigate closer co-operation between unions
- Encourage branches to establish analogous working groups to create spaces for unity and effectiveness for all our members.

3.2 A short break followed.

#### **4 Discussion Groups**

4.1 Following the break, the Chair welcomed back delegates and Jenny Lennox informed of the breakout rooms which would allow delegates to **discuss ideas for the ARPS committee workplan for the coming year**. Delegates were then split into groups and asked to report back ideas in a plenary session.

#### **4.2 Group discussions and Feedback**

4.3 Feedback from the workshop groups were shared and noted during the afternoon session:

- Collecting data on ARPS which could feed into a bigger picture on what is happening so that branches are able to build support and engage better.
- Career pathways and career progression for ARPS to help determine how ARPS can progress.
- ARPS CPD programme that tailors to ARPS needs.

- Downgrading and a standardised approach across the sector so it can be challenged.
- Casualisation – lack of data and information about new starters across universities and what agreements are in place for this.
- Hybrid working – hold conversations about policies for this which should have happened, given covid.
- Workload and ASOS around hours, emails, attending meetings, contracts, HR. In terms of ASOS, discussions were around professional services and contracts.
- Returning to work / returning to campus and issues with it, such as hot desking and space as well as personal safety.
- Grading, restructuring, redundancy.
- What can be done to support ARPS staff– share success stories, engage more, campaigning, use of material and national recruitment initiatives, conduct surveys / data gathering to get feedback on working from home, campus return, productivity, sickness absences.

4.4 Following the feedback, Jenny Lennox thanked all delegates for their contributions and also extended thanks to UCU's Christine Bernabe and Sue Bajwa for their support at the meeting. Some thought would be given to pulling together a workload survey relating specific to ARPS as work continues for the committee.

4.5 Paulina Hoyos, Chair, brought the conference to a close and expressed her thanks to all delegates in attendance and to the committee for their hard work in carrying out of the work of the ARPS and extended best wishes to all.