



## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY BRANCH NEWSLETTER December 2010

### Pay and Grading

We understand that union negotiators and management representatives are still locked into the dispute resolution and await further news.

Statistical information about staff grades, additional payments, and market supplements were published in the *Reporter* of 10 November 2010 under Notices at:  
<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2010-11/weekly/6202/>

### New Unite General Secretary

The result of the General Secretary election was formally announced by the Executive Council following a meeting on 24 November

The votes cast were as follows:

Len McCluskey - 101,194

Jerry Hicks - 52,527

Les Bayliss - 46,786

Gail Cartmail - 39,363

Congratulations to Len McCluskey who now has the difficult task of bridging the differences between the predecessor unions.

Gail Cartmail intends to continue her blog as a dialogue with members about current issues of concern. You can follow this at:  
<http://www.gailcartmail.com/2010/11/unites-executive-announces-result-of-general-secretary-ballot.html>

### Unite Education Courses 2011

The 2011 Education Course Dates are now available on the Education pages of the Unite website at: [www.uniteunion.org/dates](http://www.uniteunion.org/dates).

The development of workplace reps, safety reps, learning reps and equality reps is essential in order to give the support that our members need and expect; and which the union is committed to providing. Unite Education ensures that representatives have the required confidence, attitude and skills to deal with workplace and wider issues. This empowers them to win in the workplace, successfully campaign, organise for growth and promote dignity and respect.

### Pensions

The first meeting of the Special Joint Negotiating Committee was held on Monday 6 December. The committee was agreed by the University and Assistants Joint Board (UAJB) and was formed to negotiate the University's proposed changes to the CPS. We await further news.



USS: the consultation period for management led changes to the USS ends on 22 December. Unite, Unison and GMB have drawn up an agreed joint response. UCU are trying other tactics to get changes. Each local higher education institution (HEI) is required to consult trade unions but individual members can make separate representations via the USS website at: <http://www.ussconsultation.co.uk>. More inside on the proposed changes.

### Branch AGM

The Unite Cambridge Branch AGM took place on Monday 15 November 2010 at 12.45 pm in the USC, Mill Lane.

The following officers were elected:

Branch Chair: *Robbie Fountain*

Vice Chair: *Sara Bennett*

Secretary: *Will Smith*

Treasurer: *Paul Stokes*

Job Evaluation: *Nick Zolman*

Student Liaison: *Adam Booth*

Training officer: *Andrew Moss*

Retired members: *John Baldwin*

There were no candidates for the following positions:

Staff Development

Equal Opportunities

Personal Case Coordinator

Lifelong Learning

Health and Safety

Will Smith has informed branch that he will be standing in the forthcoming National Executive elections





## Snow chaos and your rights



Snow and ice have caused problems in many parts of the UK with transport disrupted and schools closed. So what are your rights if you can't get into work? Richard Nicolle from SNR Denton, looks at some issues.

*I couldn't get to work because of the snow. Can my boss dock my pay?* Very few jobs - except perhaps some of those in industries such as construction - have a clause written into their contract saying that if employees cannot get in to work because of weather they lose a day's pay.

Employees have statutory protection against an unauthorised deduction from their wages. If the employer has no contractual right to deduct pay and if the employee does not consent, deducting pay would be potentially subject to legal challenge. In any event, given the disruption in some parts of the country and travel warnings not to make non-essential journeys, it is unlikely that many managers would take this step.

*My child's school has closed because of the weather and there is nobody to look after them at such short notice. What are the implications at work?* Employees have the right to unpaid time off to deal with emergency situations regarding their dependents but this would not normally apply to a situation where the employee was required to look after their children as a result of not having any childcare arrangements. However, it is arguable that where school closures were announced only that morning could constitute an emergency and employees would be entitled to statutory protection for taking the day off. Strictly, the day would be unpaid but many employers are likely to take the view that a day off in these circumstances should constitute holiday.

*As a manager I am concerned that staff might be taking advantage of the weather to have a day or two away from work instead of trying to get in.* You need to be clear, consistent and transparent. Tell your staff what your policy is. While the initial blizzard conditions may have made travel to work almost impossible, you may judge that the weather and transport links have improved sufficiently so that staff could get in to work. Theoretically, an employer might contemplate disciplinary action if they felt somebody was able to work but had chosen not to. However this would involve complying with the minimum statutory disciplinary procedure and ensuring consistency between employees so it is doubtful that many employers would want to devote time and resources to investigate the circumstances of individual workers.



Another option for employers would be to deduct pay, but this is likely to be seen as unduly draconian. The most likely option is to require employees to take a day's leave as part of their holiday entitlement. They could decide that any further days off will be deducted from an employee's annual leave, but this should be communicated to staff. Alternatively, there could be arrangements for people to work from home but clearly in many jobs this just isn't practical.

There is also a potential health and safety implication: if authorities are telling people to stay at home unless their journey is essential then, potentially, there should not be pressure on people to return to work. Employers have a duty of care to their employees and a potential liability may exist if employees were pressurised into travelling by car or foot when conditions were dangerous.

Employers should therefore take a balanced approach between encouraging employees to make all reasonable efforts to get to work and forcing them into a situation where they feel they have no alternative but to travel to work or risk facing possible disciplinary action.

Source: BBC News website:  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-11886185>

## Important changes to USS pension scheme

Consultation is taking place on proposed changes to the USS pension scheme designed to keep USS sustainable, affordable and attractive.

For existing members the changes concern the increase in normal pension age to 65, contribution increases to 7.5% and cost sharing, new arrangements for flexible retirement and a cap on increases to pensions and on revaluation of deferred benefits.

New entrants to USS from 1 April 2011 will be in a defined benefit scheme based on a CARE (career average revalued earnings) approach; contributions will be 6.5%, cost sharing will be introduced; pensions will be 1/80<sup>th</sup> and a lump sum of 3/80<sup>ths</sup> of salary; benefits will be revalued each 1 April up to retirement or leaving the scheme; there will be a cap on the amount of annual increases to pensions once in payment and to the revaluation of deferred benefits; flexible retirement will give the option of taking some benefits from age 55 whilst continuing to work part-time.

There will be a vote, to take place by 20 December, on proposals submitted by 152 members of the Regent House under Statute A VIII 7. This is a separate measure and is not a substitute for the formal consultation procedure now underway.





## Cambridge University Press

At the last branch meeting held on 6 December, Daniel Perrett outlined the reasons why the CUP branch were seeking an 8.6% annual pay rise. Their calculations involved the cost of living in Cambridge, current inflation and other inflationary concerns. However CUP management have disregarded their arguments and have offered a 1% rise. Another meeting takes place on 9 December.

### Cambridgeshire against the Cuts

CATc is organising public event against the cuts to take place on Saturday 18 December at 1 pm.. Details on their website at: <http://www.cambridgeshireagainsthcuts.org.uk/>

Meanwhile Cambs CC say that up to 450 jobs are to go with free school transport facing the axe while Suffolk CC plans over 1400 job losses by April 2012.

### Anti Cuts Campaign

Demonstrations against government cuts took place in Ipswich at the end of November and in Norwich on 4 December. The rally in Norwich attracted 1200 people, one of the biggest protest marches in the city for several years said Alan Waters, a Norwich councillor.

### Spending cuts:Councils 'to lose 140,000 jobs'

Coalition spending cuts will lead to the loss of around 140,000 council jobs in the next year, local authority leaders have warned.

The Local Government Association originally predicted 100,000 posts would go in England and Wales as a result of October's Spending Review, but has now revised this view after studying the impact of cuts being made this year. Councils will be put in a "difficult" and "unprecedented" position, it says.

Chancellor George Osborne cut funding for local authorities by 7.1% from April 2011 in his spending review.

Source: BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk>

### Are you happy?

Prime Minister David Cameron is launching a £2m project on how best to measure the nation's happiness. From April, the Office for National Statistics will start measuring factors such as income inequality, health and education levels and the environment.

### Important Government savings

David Cameron has reversed his decision to employ a personal photographer and camerawoman at the taxpayers' expense.



## Cambridge students take action



*Cambridge Defend Education* said nearly 200 students took part in an occupation of the Old Schools administrative headquarters. Elsewhere students occupied Leeds university on 24 November and occupations have also taken place at UCL, LSE and at Plymouth, Newcastle and Edinburgh universities

Alice Wells, taking part in the Cambridge sit-in, said: "We are here because we believe in an education system that is open and available to all regardless of their ability to pay. We do not accept the need for this government's brutal and economically illiterate spending cuts which will damage the social fabric of this country". Another student, Sally Jefferson, said: "We're inspired by the solidarity we've received from academics, students at other universities and local residents."

University of Cambridge students initially staged a march on 30 November. They ended their occupation of the Old Schools on 6 December having been required to do so by police and University authorities. Instead they took their protest to outside the university council who were meeting to discuss the university's views on tuition fees and funding cuts

Source: BBC Cambridgeshire web site

### Support the students

A message of support to the occupying students was sent by colleagues from the University Press. Will Smith also visited the Old Schools, during the occupation and was impressed with the organisation of this event. It is not just an occupation, it is also a teach in, a political seminar and a singular protest against cuts that will affect us all. The occupation has been supported by over 300 academics members of staff and all unions.

Students around the country continued their protests on Wednesday 8 Decembe and again on Thursday 9 December before MPs made their final vote on increasing tuition fees. Although the government won. their majority was a meagre 21 votes. .

### Motions passed by branch

The following amended motions were passed by branch at the meeting of 6 December whereby the CU Unite branch resolved to :

1. Write to the university expressing disappointment at their refusal to talk and listen to the occupiers. (*The Branch Chair has written to the Vice Chancellor on behalf of the branch*).
2. Support the NUS/UCU demonstration on 9 December by publicising the event to members of the branch and by paying for the transport costs of Unite branch members who wish to attend. (*An email was sent to this effect*)





**National Officer for Education Sector:**  
Mike Robinson

**London & Eastern Regional**

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Cambridge CB3 0EL

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**Regional Secretary: Steve Hart**  
"Woodberry", 218 Green Lanes, London N4  
2HB tel: 020 8800 4281 fax: 020 8809 6501  
**For national news and issues** please visit  
the *Unite the Union* website at:  
<http://www.unitetheunion.com/>

**More information and links**

Information on the branch including details of working groups, branch structure and Minutes of monthly branch meetings can be found at:  
[www.amicus.cam.ac.uk](http://www.amicus.cam.ac.uk)

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<http://www.unitetheunion.com/>

**Branch Meetings**

Branch meetings take place on the first Monday of the month (except when a Bank Holiday occurs) at 12.45 pm in the Bramwell Lounge, University Sports and Social Centre (USC)

**UNITE Cambridge Website**

The Unite / Amicus web pages are available at: <http://www.amicus.cam.ac.uk>  
Website co-ordinator(s) : Steve Laurie and Cathy Salkield. Items for inclusion please contact: [webmaster@amicus.cam.ac.uk](mailto:webmaster@amicus.cam.ac.uk)

**Use your website:** copies of draft Minutes from monthly Branch meetings can be downloaded from the website and taken along to Branch meetings: this will help cut down on photocopying costs for the Branch.

**Branch Newsletter**

Please display a copies of Newsletter in your workplace. If you need additional copies please contact Will. Please pass copies of your Newsletter to colleagues who may not be union members to show them what Unite can do for them. Any items for inclusion in the Newsletter to Juliet Barrows at:  
[newsletter@amicus.cam.ac.uk](mailto:newsletter@amicus.cam.ac.uk)

**Branch Officials and Organisation: contact details**

Name		Email
Robbie Fountain	<b>Branch Chair</b> <i>Individual Cases</i>	<a href="mailto:chair@amicus.cam.ac.uk">chair@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
Sara Bennett	<b>Vice Chair</b>	
Will Smith	<b>Branch Secretary</b> <i>Recruitment &amp; Organisation</i>	<a href="mailto:secretary@amicus.cam.ac.uk">secretary@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
Paul Stokes	<b>Branch Treasurer</b> <i>Pensions</i>	<a href="mailto:treasurer@amicus.cam.ac.uk">treasurer@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
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John Baldwin	<b>Retired Members</b>	
Adam Booth	<b>Student Liaison</b>	
Vacant	<b>Personal Case Coordinator</b>	
Vacant	<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	<a href="mailto:health-safety@amicus.cam.ac.uk">health-safety@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
Vacant	<b>Lifelong Learning</b>	<a href="mailto:staff-dev@amicus.cam.ac.uk">staff-dev@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
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