



## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY BRANCH NEWSLETTER January 2011

### Pay and Conditions

Following a meeting of Unite's National Education Industry Committee (NEIC) on 12 January, after much debate and with very great reluctance, it was agreed to accept the offer of a 0.4% from UCEA.

There were deep reservations that both the 2009 and 2010 offers have not matched the rising RPI and that there has been no lump sum element to assist lower paid staff.

While Unite has made a pragmatic though reluctant decision to accept the 2010 offer, UCEA have been warned not to underestimate the continued levels of dissatisfaction felt by many Unite staff, particularly concerning recent pay awards enjoyed by vice chancellors and senior academic staff. Unite seeks a clear understanding from UCEA that below-inflation pay increases should be rectified once circumstances allow.

Unite will begin work on assessing the implementation of a 35-hour week and has agreed to share this information with UCEA.

On job security Unite remains committed to a national set of principles and discussions have been taking place via ACAS and other unions with UCEA.

UCEA are willing, however, to sign a training and development agreement and a training and development forum will complete the draft agreement. UCEA have also offered to assist Unite to survey HEIs on their attitude to discounted fees for children of staff.

Other unions are still in talks with UCEA so no payment, such as it is, can be made until such time as these discussions are fully resolved.

### Pensions

**USS consultative vote:** The results of the consultative vote held between 7 December and 20 December 2010 were as follows:

In favour of UCU's negotiating position with regard to USS pension scheme: 802

In favour of the employer's current proposals for the USS pension scheme: 186

Total number of voting papers issued: 6,388

Total number of valid voting papers received: 988

From *Reporter* 12 January 2011

**CPS:** a meeting was held on 13 January at which details of how the CPS scheme will progress was discussed.

### CPI/RPI

Ministers have backed away from forcing private company pensions schemes to use the Consumer prices Index rather than the Retail Prices Index to uprate pensions. This would mean a cut in the value of pensions. The change has already been introduced however for state and public sector schemes from April.

### National Executive election

There will be a special meeting on **Monday 31 January** to vote on nominations to the NEC. Representatives are voted for region by region and by sector. The Cambridge Branch can vote for 4 regional seats and two sectors.

Will, our Branch Secretary is standing as a regional representative. Details of all candidates will be circulated to all Unite members.

## Union leaders meet PM

Shortly before Christmas, on 20 December 2010, union leaders met with David Cameron in Downing Street for the first time to raise their concerns over the coalition government's cuts programme.

After the meeting, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber warned of a "bleak midwinter" as a result of cuts. Rail, Maritime and Transport union general secretary Bob Crow said in support of Unite's call for a campaign of industrial action: "Len McCluskey is spot on. We need co-ordinated action, and a social and political movement ....if we are to turn the tide on the fiscal fascism of this ConDem government." Source: *BBC News*: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12037166>

## Bleak midwinter for public sector workers

Thousands of public sector workers received grim news about their jobs just days before Christmas. The GMB union says "at risk" warning letters were sent out as councils and others served legal notice of cuts. With an estimated 87,374 public sector posts under threat at 107 UK councils, it was a grim Christmas for many. Local authorities have until 31 March to start making savings and by law have to give staff 90 days' notice. The redundancies follow hefty cuts to councils' budgets as a result of government austerity measures. The final, legal deadline to formally announce job cuts was 1 January 2011.

In December the latest jobless figures for the UK showed a 35,000 increase to 2.5 million in the three months to October. Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

## Jayaben Desai dies

The Grunwick dispute, led by Jayaben Desai, was something of a milestone in union history. Grunwick was a film processing laboratory employing a large proportion of female Asian workers. Desai was one of a number of workers who walked out in August 1976, in support of a sacked colleague and set up pickets outside the factory. Although only four feet tall, Desai's passionate campaign to improve wages encouraged many more workers to walk out. The dispute rapidly escalated, culminating in pitched battles between mass pickets and police as the company bussed in other workers. The company steadfastly refused to allow its workers to join a union and, in July 1978, the strikers finally gave up the struggle. Although seen as a defeat for the unions, it did focus attention on the plight of immigrant workers in the UK. "We have shown," said Desai, "that workers like us, new to these shores, will never accept being treated without dignity or respect." Source: *BBC News Magazine*

## Default Retirement Age of 65 to end: submit your comments to HR Working Group

The Government has confirmed its intention to remove the statutory Default Retirement Age (DRA) of 65 with effect from 6 April 2011 (with transitional procedures covering the period 6 April 2011 to 30 September 2011).

This means that you cannot be compulsorily retired using DRA procedure. However individual employers may still be able to operate a compulsory retirement age "provided that they can objectively justify it" and have a fair and transparent procedure for dealing with termination of employment on grounds of retirement.

The University has agreed to the setting up of a working group to give preliminary consideration to its options in relation to the proposed changes, and to propose policy and procedural changes as appropriate. The issues it will be considering include: Should the University seek to put in place an employer-based DRA to take effect upon the change to the law in 2011?

If so, what should the retirement age be? Should there be a single DRA for all categories of staff? If an employer-based DRA is not to be retained, what steps should the University take to manage the transition to a context where employment may no longer be terminated by reason of retirement? More generally, what steps should the University take to support flexibility in working patterns and pensions entitlements for those employees who are nearing, or over, the pensionable age?

The working group invites comments from staff during January 2011. Comments can be made until 31 January 2011 to [dra@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:dra@admin.cam.ac.uk).

## DRC Photography Competition

The Disability Resource Centre is inviting photo entries from staff and students on the subject of Disability at Cambridge

## Experiences of disability at the University of Cambridge

Who can enter? Any student studying at the University and any employee of the University, its colleges and affiliated institutions.

*Prizes and prizegiving and the chance to see your photo in print*

More information at: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/uni/disability/photo> or email: [disability@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:disability@admin.cam.ac.uk)

**Deadline: 5 pm Tuesday 1 March 2011**

## Silent Vigil

On Monday 18 January at midday some 200 lecturers in Cambridge took part in a Silent Vigil outside the Senate House to protest against cuts to higher education and the increases in student fees.

The protest was organised by Cambridge Academic Campaign for Higher Education (CACHE) which is comprised of a "group of academics and members of the Regent House, who have come together to address the challenges posed by the ongoing attacks on British universities and university funding.



Photo: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/160729.html>

## Outsourcing

Members are asked to inform Will if they are aware of any outsourcing that is taking place in their workplaces. This is most likely to affect cleaning and maintenance staff. Affected staff would come under TUPE regulations.

## Cambridgeshire Against the Cuts

In Cambridgeshire the County Council are set to make £160m cuts; 450 full-time County Council jobs are at risk, with many more part-time jobs threatened. With area-based grants to local authorities cut by 27%, those services targeted are in the front line: schools, children's social care, family support and youth services, which account for 45% of the Council's budget.

Info at: <http://www.cambridgeshireagainstthecuts.org.uk/>

## Cambridge University Press

At the last Branch meeting on 10 January Daniel reported on the CUP pay claim: management made a revised offer of a 2% rise and Christmas Eve as a holiday for a quick agreement but members rejected this at a subsequent meeting.

## Diary Dates

### Tuesday 25 January

Lobby of Cambridge County Council from 0800 am, Shire Hall

### Saturday 5 February

#### Unite Against the Cuts

London & SE Regions  
Members and Activists Conference  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square  
London WC1

### Saturday 12 February

Cambridgeshire Against the Cuts  
demonstration

1200 noon, Parker's Piece, Cambridge

<http://www.cambridgeshireagainstthecuts.org.uk/>

### People's Convention Conference Saturday 12 February, London

### Tuesday 15 February

Lobby of full Cambridgeshire County Council  
Budget Meeting from 08.00, Shire Hall

### Saturday 26 March

#### TUC National Day of Action

Assemble 11.00 am Victoria Embankment for  
march and rally in Hyde Park

See: [www.tuc.org.uk/march](http://www.tuc.org.uk/march)

Join the campaign at: [www.falseeconomy.org](http://www.falseeconomy.org).

## Motions passed by branch

The Branch is affiliated to Cambridgeshire Against the Cuts. At the Branch meeting on 10 January 2011 a series of motions was passed whereby the Branch Secretary has agreed to publicise and offer support to them at various upcoming activities (see Diary dates).

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

**London & Eastern Regional**

**Regional Officer:** Ian Maidlow  
Transport House, 101 Madingley Road  
Cambridge CB3 0EL  
tel: 01223 353 048 fax: 01223 311 081

**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)

For national news and issues please visit the  
*Unite the Union* website at:  
<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 : Cathy Salkield. I  
tems 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)

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**Branch Officials and Organisation: contact details**

Name		Email
Robbie Fountain	<i>Branch Chair Individual Cases</i>	<a href="mailto:chair@amicus.cam.ac.uk">chair@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
Sara Bennett	<i>Vice Chair</i>	
Will Smith	<i>Branch Secretary Recruitment &amp; Organisation</i>	<a href="mailto:secretary@amicus.cam.ac.uk">secretary@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
Paul Stokes	<i>Branch Treasurer Pensions</i>	<a href="mailto:treasurer@amicus.cam.ac.uk">treasurer@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
Andrew Moss	<i>Training Officer</i>	<a href="mailto:rep-training@amicus.cam.ac.uk">rep-training@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
Nik Zolman	<i>Job Evaluation</i>	<a href="mailto:job-evaluation@amicus.cam.ac.uk">job-evaluation@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
John Baldwin	<i>Retired Members</i>	
Adam Booth	<i>Student Liaison</i>	
Vacant	<i>Personal Case Coordinator</i>	
Vacant	<i>Health &amp; Safety</i>	<a href="mailto:health-safety@amicus.cam.ac.uk">health-safety@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
Vacant	<i>Lifelong Learning</i>	<a href="mailto:staff-dev@amicus.cam.ac.uk">staff-dev@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>
Vacant	<i>Equal Opportunities</i>	<a href="mailto:dignity-equality@amicus.cam.ac.uk">dignity-equality@amicus.cam.ac.uk</a>