



## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY BRANCH NEWSLETTER November 2010

### **Pay and Grading**

#### **2010 Pay Claim**

Mike Robinson, the Unite National Officer, Education has written regarding the 2010 pay claim: this is to advise you the Unite Education Industry Committee met on 25 October 2010 to hear the result of the recent ballot on 2010 Pay and other negotiations: 36.8% of members participating voted to accept the offer. 63.1% rejected the offer.

It was agreed to formally write to UCEA, the employers association, to reject the 0.4% offer and to enter the dispute resolution procedure. It was further agreed that any resolution of the dispute should include a firm commitment by the Employers to address the question of low paid staff working in higher education.

Four unions have now rejected the 0.4% offer, EIS, GMB, UCU and Unite; one has voted to accept. The national Unite committee was unhappy that the issue of low paid staff was not addressed in the poor offer. You will also recall that the Employers have left open the possibility of withdrawing the offer if it was not accepted by the end of October.

Unite has formally registered rejection of the offer with the employers representatives. The national dispute resolution procedures are now underway.

#### **Election for Unite General Secretary**

Nominations for general Secretary are now closed. The Branch nomination is for Gail Cartmail while Cambridge University Press have nominated Jerry Hicks. They are among the four final candidates and individual voting is now taking place. Members are urged to use their vote: voting takes place until 19 November 2010. Counting takes place between 20 – 21 November 2010, with the winner being declared on Wednesday 24 November 2010

### **Pensions**

The University and Assistants Joint Board (UAJB) have agreed that a Special Negotiating Committee be formed to negotiate the proposed changes by the University to the CPS .

USS: Universities have given notice that we are in a consultation period for management-led changes to the USS.

### **First Aiders**

At the branch meeting of 1 November 2010 there was discussion about the proposed phasing out of additional payments to University First Aiders.

Unite has raised this with management and the phasing out process has been postponed pending further discussions.

### **Branch AGM**

The Cambridge University Unite branch AGM will be held on Monday 15 November at 12.45 in the Bramwell Lounge, USC. Nominations in writing for branch positions are requested by Friday 12 November to Will Smith. All members are urged to attend.

### **Fire Brigade Strike**

At the last branch meeting on 1 November, Sara Bennett from the University Press, explained the difficulties being faced by the striking fire fighters in London. It was agreed at the meeting that branch would send a message of support and a £50 donation. There was also a separate collection for the London Fire Fighters fund.

## New Health and Safety Report

A new report by Lord Young entitled '*Common Sense, Common Safety*' was published on 15 October. It examines the impact of health and safety regulations on businesses and on personal freedom.

The report puts forward a series of policies to improve the perception of health and safety, to ensure it is taken seriously by employers and the general public while aiming to reduce the burden on small business. It also aims to restrict the further growth of the 'compensation culture'.

For instance Lord Young proposes a common sense approach to educational trips, which currently entail a plethora of form filling, deterring teachers and others from arranging trips at all.

In order to ensure consistency and professionalism in implementing health and safety legislation, Lord Young recommends that consultants who undertake workplace assessment should be professionally qualified and registered on an online database. Responses to the *Your Freedom* website showed the recommendations echo public concerns about health and safety and the compensation culture. Contributions to the website also showed widespread misunderstandings about legislation.

Recommendations in the new report also cover the following: Low hazard workplaces; Raising standards; Insurance; Local authorities; Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995; Combining food safety and health and safety inspections

More information at: [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news\\_releases/2010/101015-young.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2010/101015-young.aspx)

The TUC's Health and Safety Officer, Hugh Robertson, commented "Lord Young's report will be seriously unbalanced." He continued "The real health and safety scandal in the UK is the 20,000 people who die each year due to injury or disease linked to their work. A serious review of health and safety would put far more emphasis on dealing with unavoidable death and suffering"

## First aiders: "I wouldn't be here without them"

Whilst Cambridge University looks at scrapping the the small additional payment (honorarium) it makes to those staff members who have put themselves forward to be first aiders, we talked to a member of staff who is very grateful for their services. Colin Adams, a Senior Building Services Technician at the Department of Engineering.

With over 27 years of service under his belt, Colin had never had any reason to call on the services of a first aider, until one fateful day in July 2004. He had been doing lots of work overhead with a colleague. He kept having to stop because of pains in his left arm. Fortunately his colleague Paul, was suspicious of the symptoms, and advised Colin to visit the doctor. Colin relates how the doctor advised of slight high blood pressure, and he returned back to his work. Shortly on arrival he collapsed. Colin tells me "A first aider was walking past who had just done a course on heart resuscitation. She resuscitated me until the paramedics arrived". A colleague interjects "You died, didn't you Colin." "Yes, that's right" says Colin.

A general discussion arises about first aid skills. How more of us could do with them and how people respond to various situations - through goodwill, through fear, through lack of knowledge. "I don't know why they don't teach first aid at school", says one of Colin's colleagues. "Much better than learning dates and things. Practical life skills, that's what you need". There's a general air of agreement. Colin is keen to assert though, that it's very important that the skills are kept up to date, and people have the appropriate training.

I ask Colin how would he feel if payments to First Aiders were cut, and consequently no First Aiders came forward. "I wouldn't be here", he tells me "I wouldn't be here without them".

**Note on employers' legal duties:** the *Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981* require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities **and personnel** to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work. These Regulations apply to all workplaces including those with less than five employees and to the self-employed.

A first aider is someone who has undertaken training and has a qualification approved by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This means that they must hold a certificate of competence in either first aid at work (FAW) or emergency first aid at work (EFAW) issued by a training organisation approved by HSE. To keep basic skills up to date first aiders should undertake annual refresher training.

## Motions passed by branch

At the branch meeting of 1 November the following motions were passed by branch:

1. The Cambridge University Unite branch resolved to support the NUS/UCU demonstration on Wednesday 10 November by publicising the event to members and by paying for places for Unite members who take the coaches provided from Cambridge to London. Passed by 11 votes in favour, none against.

2. The CU Unite branch resolved to approach the Cambridge University Students' Union, CU UCU branch, CU Unison branch and any relevant unions at Anglia Ruskin University, with a view to publicising and organising a joint public meeting, in order to sustain and strengthen the campaign against higher education cuts. Passed by 15 votes in favour, none against.

The full text of these motions is available on the website.

## Campaigns

**The National Union of Students and UCU** demonstration. "Fund our Future, Stop Education Cuts" took place on Wednesday 10 November in London. In an open letter to Nick Clegg, NUS President Aaron Porter also called on the Deputy Prime Minister to defend the rise in tuition fees and meet students and those protesting. Branch helped fund a coach to take demonstrators to attend in support.

**Note:** The NUS now estimates that over 45,000 people took part in Wednesday's demonstration - a huge turnout and far greater than expected.

"Education is a right" said Kathy Taylor, a lecturer from Newcastle speaking on Wednesday's BBC *Breakfast Show* along with student Hannah Williams from LSE. She added that the government were reneging on their duty to provide education.

**Unite 4 NHS campaign:** this campaign is directed against "efficiency savings to the NHS" which will, it is claimed, help dismantle the NHS. To add your support go to: <http://nhs.unitetheunion.org/page/s/addyourvoice>

**Cambridgeshire against the Cuts** are organising an open conference against cuts to jobs, services, pay, pensions and benefits. This will take place on **Saturday 20 November** at the Bailey Rooms, Castle Court, Shire Hall, Cambridge from 10.30 am – 4.00 pm. Further details can be found at: <http://www.cambridgeshireagainstthecuts.org.uk/>

## Cambridge University Press

CUP reps are currently working on their annual pay claim.

## Union fees

Some members may have received bank statements with the words "last payment" beside the union fee direct debit entry. Fees, however, will not stop being deducted and membership status will not be affected. Under the recent merger between Amicus and TGWU, the membership and finance departments are being amalgamated and these payments are the last to be taken under the former Amicus system.

## UCL cleaners live on poverty wages

The UCL Living Wage Campaign, a coalition of cleaners, students, alumni and academic staff formed two years ago at University College, London, has demanded that contract cleaners at UCL get paid the living wage of £7.85 per hour – the threshold needed to survive in London – instead of the minimum wage of £5.80 per hour.

Professor Malcolm Grant, UCL Provost, insists that paying the 180-odd cleaners a living wage is a "luxury" the university cannot afford. The five other nearby universities have adopted the London living wage for directly employed and contracted staff with Goldsmiths committed to follow suit when its cleaning contracts next come up for renewal.

The London living wage has been gaining credence: in 2008 Boris Johnson committed the GLA to paying it, while Ed Milliband has called for a living wage to be implemented nationwide with companies offered a tax break in return. More than 100 employers have adopted the London living wage.

Professor Grant is the second-highest paid university head in the country. His 2009 travel expenses of £12,280 exceed the average annual salary of a UCL cleaner by 33%.

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Mike Robinson

**London & Eastern Regional**

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**Regional Secretary: Steve Hart**

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**For national news and issues** please visit  
the *Unite the Union* website at:  
<http://www.unitetheunion.com/>

**Branch membership records**

We are particularly interested in obtaining email addresses for those of you that have access to email and details of those of you who do not, to ensure that branch information is communicated in the fastest and most effective way.

If you have not already done so, please send your details to Will as follows: Name, Place of Work including postal address and post code where known, Work phone number, Email address, Job role/Job title and Job category, your contract terms i.e. full time/part time/variable hours/hourly paid and contract type: agency, fixed-term, permanent, self-employed.  
Thank you

**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 who will also be arranging for those members without email to receive their copies of the Newsletter via UMS. Please pass copies of your Newsletter to colleagues who may not be union members to show them what Unite can do for them.

**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)

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**Branch officials and organisation: contact details**

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