THE BRANCH SOLIDARITY NETWORK

THE UNIVERSITY IS OURS

How to build an activist union branch

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
Unions: The Folks That Brought You the Weekend
Des Freedman, Goldsmiths UCU

It's a popular bumper sticker and an accurate slogan: trade unions are the backbone of the movement for fair pay, decent working conditions and social justice. In the UK, there are more than six million union members, making it potentially a powerful force for progressive political change.

But what makes a union strong? It's not just about having a militant leadership (though, that would be welcome) or a set of nice-sounding policies. These things are needed, but also it is about the ability of individual branches to represent members by facing up to all the issues that concern them. It's about having branches that are for members, run by members, accountable to and able to mobilise members.

The UCU represents tens of thousands of lecturers, librarians, technicians, researchers and administrators in Higher Education and thousands more joined in 2018 because of the pensions' strikes. Many branches found their voice during the course of the dispute and came to realise that they could be a powerful force for change both inside our universities and within UCU as a national organisation.

Branches now routinely organise not simply on 'bread and butter' issues but also against the growth in both zero-hours and fixed-term contracts; they're involved in campus-based campaigns against outsourcing of catering, cleaning and security. Also they're initiating demands for more democratic forms of governance and an end to discrimination in pay and promotion; and they're joining forces with students to demand increased resources for mental health and better housing.

The Branch Solidarity Network came out of the grass-roots militancy that emerged during the 2018 pensions dispute. It was set up by activists in order to share the most imaginative ideas, impressive slogans, urgent initiatives and best practices with other activists.

And that's exactly what the *Branch Activist Handbook* is designed to do.

It's not a bureaucratic rule book or a manifesto for a non-marketised university system (though that would be a great idea). It's a collection of stories and suggestions from higher education branches that have campaigned on a wide variety of issues that we want to share with other branches. We want these ideas to go viral in order to help build democratic, representative and militant branches that will be the most effective bulwark against our employers and the most effective defenders of the interests of all our members.

ACTIVE BRANCH	PASSIVE BRANCH
Interventionist & ambitious remit	Insular & narrow focus
In constant contact with members	Infrequent communication
Changing leadership & regular elections	Dominated by incumbents & no elections
Works closely with other campus unions	Avoids collaborating with other campus unions
Highly visible	Virtually invisible
Regular meetings & events	Meetings are rare & communicates mostly via email
Delegates responsibilities, eg. via departmental reps	Highly centralised, burden falls on tiny number of people
Champions equalities work	Sees equalities work as secondary
Imaginative & risk taking (even in difficult conditions)	Conservative and cautious because it's easier that way
Acts like a network	Feels like a hierarchy

What is an Activist Branch?
Jess Meacham, Vice-President, Sheffield UCU

What makes a strong UCU branch? Here at Sheffield UCU we have a large and active membership. Partly that's to do with the city and the University's history of activism and radicalism - the People's Republic of South Yorkshire and its trade union history are rightly widely known. But partly it's do with a branch culture that can be implemented by any branch with the resources to do so.

We've always been a campaigning branch. We're affiliated to a number of national and local political campaigns, and we regularly send delegates to Sheffield Trades Council. We donate to local disputes and are active in local politics in a multitude of ways, which are regularly discussed at branch meetings. We have members across the political spectrum but in the recent USS strike we were particularly glad of support from our local Labour MPs and branches. This activism extends to getting involved in UCU matters regionally and nationally - we send delegates to our regional committee and to UCU Congress every year, as well as attending a range of activist and member-led meetings nationally. We try to get our branch banner out to local demos and marches as often as we can.

We recruit new members in a range of ways. We have a network of departmental reps and contacts who reach out to new staff and publicise their involvement in the union via our webpages and in their departmental meetings and communications. We attend induction events for new staff and make ourselves visible on campus during UCU's recruitment weeks and at the beginning of each academic year. Our branch officers, departmental contacts and other members are always available to talk about joining UCU with new staff and postgraduate students. We put up posters on our office doors and departmental noticeboards to ensure that UCU is a visible presence in our workplace.

We think communicating with members is a vital part of branch engagement. We send out regular newsletters via email that keep our members up to date with local negotiations. We write longer-form articles on our blog that we try to share as widely as we can. We have an active social media presence that has been become increasingly important over the last few years. Most importantly, we hold regular branch meetings so that members can get together and talk about the issues in person, and we try hard to make these as accessible as possible. We also hold regular action group meetings on particular topics, so that members with a particular interest in a given issue can discuss the best ways to approach it locally - recent action groups have been on topics like sexual violence, lecture capture, and Saturday working. Our branch committee always welcomes new members and our branch officer positions are refreshed regularly.

We have an excellent working relationship with Sheffield Students' Union, which also has a long history of activism. Every year we meet with the new sabbatical officers to discuss our respective priorities for the year and consider how we can best support each other in our respective aims. We believe that staff and students' interests are closely linked and that all the campus unions should be talking to each other about how best to achieve our shared goals.

We try to ensure that members who want to get involved with the branch can do so in whatever ways suit them best. We have a team of caseworkers who work hard for our members on an individual level, and we have members with expertise in everything from equalities to industrial relations to pensions. We believe in harnessing the skills and interests of as many members as possible so that we can campaign effectively both locally and nationally on the issues that matters most to us.

Our universities feel increasingly like businesses and not spaces of learning and they behave more and more like real estate ventures and not public bodies. In this context, how can activists put into practice the popular slogan that 'we are the university'?

I: Democratising the University

Why Democratising University Governance Matters
Prof Natalie Fenton, Goldsmiths UCU

Since the wholesale introduction of fees and the end of the block teaching grant, universities have suffered the stark consequences of moving from a system organised around the principle of public interest to one based on private value. The costs to our systems of governance have been extensive. Higher education is now organised around the principle of return on investment rather than expanding our capacities as human beings and our contribution to society. Students are encouraged to think of university education in terms of how much money they put in and how much they get out – what do universities contribute to their earning capacity. What Collini has called "barren utilitarianism". The compression of HE into a financial model has not only increased massively the debt burden on students and the public purse, but has transformed what universities are – they are no longer places of deep learning where society, culture, citizenship and democracy are produced rather they have become economic machines for producing human capital. How is this relevant to internal systems of governance? Democracy becomes incoherent where humans are only market valued – there is no space for participation or for deliberation because the terms of the endeavour are firmly set in capital. In the fight to get more money in through more student admissions we focus solely on beating ratings and improving metrics and collegiality is beaten into submission. In these circumstances we suffer what Wendy Brown calls the 'structural displacement of shared governance'. We are left with more hierarchy, more managerialism, more pseudo-consultation, less collaboration and little understanding or even care for what many of us came into the sector for.

The Gold Paper Campaign
Prof Natalie Fenton, Goldsmiths UCU

The Gold Paper came out of necessity. An urgent need to address what universities have become – to address the harm the current neoliberal system has wrought on public institutions and to the people within them. For staff the harm is experienced in multiple ways – the individualisation of the profession through meeting targets and metrics at every level: teaching excellence, research excellence, external funding, student employability, knowledge exchange and impact - with workloads that are frequently overwhelming.

It began with two central ambitions: to restate our purpose and to reclaim a vision of the public university. It aims to be both visionary (what the university could become if it actually reflected what the people who constitute it think it should be) and pragmatic (offering a feasible means to change). It is collaborative and inclusive – from porters to professors, including students and the communities in which universities are located. It is an organic, iterative and open campaign process recognising that doing things democratically takes time. It is evidence based and action driven to avoid being easily dismissed and short lived.

The people within the campaign chose to focus on democratic governance as a means to gain access to decision-making that could become open and inclusive, transparent and accountable. It is seeking a formal 'General Assembly' integrated into the structures of governance and inclusive of all staff and students. It wishes to democratise all committees, boards and councils involved in governance making them fully representative of staff and students with wholly elected bodies. It seeks the election of all management positions including the at the very top. Fighting for shared governance means realising our voice within universities and claiming the means to make change happen.

How Do We Change University Governance?
Eric Lybeck, Manchester UCU

Many universities have changed their governance in recent decades, re-chartering and rewriting their statutes and regulations. Often these changes are the product of consultants, resulting in a relatively homogenous framework giving maximum flexibility to managers and governing bodies and less and less autonomy to academics. It is worth familiarizing yourself with these changes, locally; most universities have public documents available online or in their archives. Compare these to both original charters and statutes at other universities. Find out where academics are 'supposed' to interact with and set policy and consider running for elected offices if these exist, for example, in Senate or Academic Council roles or similar.

At a branch level, you might consider establishing a 'Governance and Policy Officer' role as we did when I was at Exeter to develop an overview of the entire policy landscape, which can be quite complex indeed.

Organise campaigns around governance goals.
A practical strategy connecting the historical work surrounding statutes and the new experiences learned in actual committee participation would involve undoing particular problematic changes to statutes and ordinances. For example, many senior managers have become more or less professional administrators, serving several terms and amassing considerable formal and informal power. Typically these roles are, or were until recently, connected to term limits, with the idea being senior managers were fulfilling a civic function within the university and would step up for, say, four years, and then step down, returning to their departments. Particularly when you see a problematic policy coming 'from above' – for example, a new rule mandating more hours spent marking without corresponding changes in workload allocation – rather than just challenging the rule, challenge the process through which this decision was made. What consultations had been done? And, importantly, ask: has this rule been considered in terms of impacts on academic quality.

Governance is more than a means to an end.
Reclaim the university! by reminding lay governors, senior managers and policymakers that it is our professional responsibility to maintain the quality of higher learning. Many activists may balk at the traditionalism or elitism of such notions. However, my own experience suggests that rhetoric emphasising archaic notions of 'academic values', 'self-governance', 'autonomy' and so forth, can give you the higher moral ground. It can become very difficult for managers to dismiss your criticisms if they demonstrate a decline in standards or a restriction of thought. Within the field of university governance, taking the high moral ground can often be an essential position from which we defend ourselves, our staff and students. Once preserved, we can then work to change our institutions in new, more inclusive images and for wider public benefit. After all, 'We Are the University'.

Ubercapitalism - and What Can Be Done About It
Gary Hall, Coventry UCU

We live in an increasingly übercapitalist society. It's übercapitalist in that a specific version of neoliberalism, characterised by low pay, zero-hours and fixed-term contracts, is growing ever more aggressive (the prefix 'über' means 'irresistible', 'higher', 'more powerful'); and that the disruptive technology firm Uber offers one of the most high-profile examples of this intensified form of deregulated capitalism in which work is becoming low in quality but high in risk and stress.

As recent court judgements against Uber and Pimlico Plumbers demonstrate, precarious workers are still able to fight for better conditions and win, no matter how irresistible these companies may seem. Yet the struggle against übercapitalism is not only a matter of returning to workers the employment rights they have lost as a result of outsourcing and casualisation. Just as business is innovating so we need to invent new strains of unionisation. But how do we develop new forms of solidarity and collective bargaining in the context of übercapitalism?

Union branch activists could begin by campaigning for all those working in the university, including students, to retain control of the knowledge and data they generate by placing it under a Peer Production License (PPL) or something similar. Such a licence would function to create a common stock of non-privately owned information that everyone in the institution would collectively manage, share, and be free to access and use on the same equal basis. For instance, it would allow universities as communities to decide that any for-profit business wishing to privatize and commodify their research must pay a fair price for it (rather than getting it cheaply or indeed for free as is frequently the case now), while also ensuring it remains openly available for use in the non-profit public sphere.

Such an approach would make the academy far less vulnerable to disruption at the hands of any future HE equivalent of Uber. Indeed, it would enable universities to disrupt privately owned companies such as Elsevier and Academia.edu that have a business model resting on their ability to parasitically trade off publicly funded education and labour.

Better working conditions could also be put into practice. Because any data would be collectively owned and governed, the rights of workers and students regarding such data could be protected – and discriminatory behaviours guarded against. Anything even close to the performance monitoring, surveillance and behavioural control of an übercapitalist outfit such as Amazon could be rejected.

Most importantly, such a collaborative, commons-based approach to organising university labour would differ significantly from the hierarchical, top-down, wealth-concentrating ownership and management structure of most übercapitalist firms. The latter take great care to separate their for-profit business from the workers and users who generate it. In the former, however, those who do the work and generate the value – academics, researchers, students, librarians, technicians, managers, administrators, cleaners, caterers, security staff – would also own and control the knowledge and data on which the 'business' is built.

The university would then truly be ours.

Addressing Governance in your University
Vincent Moystad, Goldsmiths UCU

Universities run by and for staff and students are an important political goal, but even in the shorter term, democratic reforms to governance are a crucial strategic aim. Having not only a voice, but actual decision-making power is crucial if we are going to transform our universities.

Many colleagues have similar stories of cynicism and despondency around the issue of governance however: very few feel comfortable characterising their university governance as meaningfully democratic.

Key themes emerge from research into governance:

• Demanding greater democratic participation can help to constitute a collective political subject, with campaigns for democratisation (and activist participation in governance) dramatising the conflict of interest between management and everyone else at the university.

• The more advanced campaigns emphasise the importance of being specific in what changes are demanded campaigners should think carefully about which extant structures have the potential to be democratic fora, and then consider what kind of seemingly modest changes to these could help actualise this potential.

• Management is professional and participating in governance is their primary role, while academic and other staff must do so on top of their day to day responsibilities. Democratisation is therefore not just about structural changes, but also about building capacity to participate.

YOU'RE **FIRED!** FOR SOME OTHER SUBSTANTIAL REASON

Campaigns to Defend University Statutes

University Statutes and Ordinances provide the constitutional framework that allows the University to govern its affairs. The Statutes are pieces of legislation that can only be changed with agreement by the Privy Council. In 2016-17, the University of Warwick announced plans to gut its employment statute, Statute 24, thus putting at risk Warwick staff's job security and academic freedom. At the University of Leeds in 2017, university management sought to introduce dismissal for 'some other substantial reason' (SOSR) into Statue VIII and remove medical and legal chairs in some dismissal appeal procedures. In both cases, there was mass mobilisation of UCU members, including a three-day strike in Leeds against what they called this new 'sacker's charter'. At Warwick, UCU branch pressure forced the University Senate not to approve the reforms at its meeting in 2018 and prevented the amendments from going forward to Council. The battles in Leeds and Warwick are ongoing however, with management continuing efforts to re-write statutes and ordinances and push through changes that will lessen employment rights.

Democratise SOAS
Meera Sabaratnam, SOAS UCU

The Democratise SOAS campaign started in 2015 when a Student Union sabbatical officer noticed that the committees that run the School were full of managers but not many academics. Together with others, the SU organised a Staff-Student Forum in which issues of academic governance were discussed, plus a whole range of other issues to do with democracy in the university. Hundreds of staff and students turned up to talk about democracy at SOAS, and the Democratise SOAS campaign was launched. Following the meeting, an open letter to trustees was drawn up to complain about the structures at SOAS, which hundreds of staff and students signed. The trustees agreed to bring forward a review of the governance structures. A working group around Democratise SOAS developed a discussion paper around academic representation, executive accountability and School governance and the faculty system. In 2016, the new Vice Chancellor, Valerie Amos arrived and the campaign persuaded her that academic governance reform was a priority. An Academic Senate was created and Academic Board was expanded through the Governance Review team. Senate elections were held and there is now ongoing work around committee memberships and elections of Heads of Departments.

The proposals from our discussion paper (https://democratisesoas.wordpress.com) were as follows:

Amend SOAS Standing Order II(i) to re-constitute Academic Board with an equal number of elected HODs and elected non-executive academic staff   (as well as 3-4 elected student representatives, 3-4 ex officio managers, and an elected non-executive academic chair) to receive reports, vote on proposals, and communicate directly with the SOAS Board of Trustees

Amend SOAS Standing Order IV(iii) to modernize Executive Board so that proposals affecting academic research, teaching, and student welfare are put to a vote by Academic Board as a matter of routine (not merely 'as necessary')

Amend SOAS Charter Article IX to establish a SOAS Senate with universal academic-staff membership and, meeting once each term, the power to vote on proposals put forward by the School's Academic and/or Executive Board

Establish a Staff-Student Forum meeting once each term to provide all members of SOAS with a venue to discuss issues of mutual concern

Endorse the principle of **co-locating administrative staff within Departments**

We call upon the School community, and especially the Board of Trustees (which is ultimately responsible for institutional governance), to consider the concerns expressed in this paper and to endorse its proposals.

Checklist:

1.   Has your branch considered appointing a governance officer or a governance committee who can keep track of who is on Council, committee membership, processes of appointment, and important policy changes?

2.   Are union members aware of, and do they run for elected positions on Senate, committees or academic board?

3.   Does your branch watch out for and challenge any changes in statutes and regulations?

4.   Have you compared your university statutes to those in other universities?

5.   Has your branch considered creating a General Assembly where motions can be proposed and voted on?

6.   Do you have a meeting at the start of each year with Student Union president and sabbatical officers (who often sit on important committees) to see how you can support each others work and priorities at this level?

7.   Has your branch looked into fair representation of students, staff and community members on Council and its sub-committees?

8.   Has your branch looked into campaigning to elect committee chairs, pro-vice-chancellors and vice chancellors?

II: Anti-casualisation

Higher education is one of the most casualised industries on the planet and depends for its everyday functioning on precarious labour and insecure contracts. Zero hour contracts, wage theft and experiences of 'academic apartheid' characterise campus life and mean that we need to work together to secure better working conditions for the most vulnerable groups of staff in HE.

Durham Casuals
Laura Campbell, Durham UCU

The Durham Casuals movement essentially started on the picket lines of the UCU pensions strike in 2018, which gave staff on precarious contracts from around the university the opportunity to make contact, compare notes, and organise. A meeting was called at Durham's historic Miners' Hall, with the aim of establishing a network to push back against the precarious working conditions for colleagues on insecure contracts. At this meeting, a picture of what it was like to be employed on a temporary contract at Durham began to emerge. Many colleagues were employed on 9 month contracts, others had been strung along on multiple temporary contracts for a number of years, while some worked at an hourly rate of less than minimum wage. Nearly all of these contracts were teaching-only contracts, which left little time for colleagues aiming for a research career to develop the publication profile that is so crucial to escaping the cycle of casual work.

In response to both the marked proliferation of temporary contracts in the past few years, as well as new university regulations that short-term teaching contracts must be no longer than 9 months, we submitted a claim to the university via the UCU with the help of the UCU Regional Office. This called specifically for the end of 9 month contracts, as well as proper pay and provisions for staff on temporary contracts. In the meantime, groups of casualised staff were engaging in department-based negotiations. When neither of these measures provoked a clear response from the university, we decided to take to social media. A 'Durham Casuals' Twitter account was created, which began by simply tweeting facts about the difficulties faced by staff on precarious contracts. Some examples include: "Hourly-paid tutors in Philosophy are paid £3.50 per first year summative essay"; "Lecturers on temporary contracts are not entitled to maternity leave if
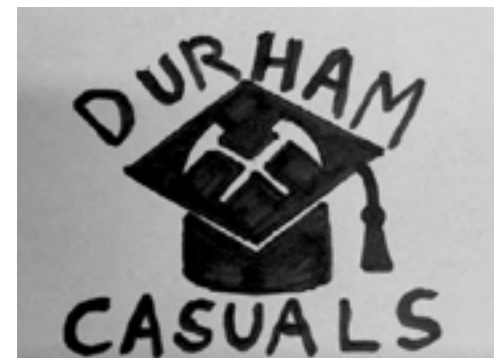
their contract finishes before the 15th week before the baby is due"; "Hourly-paid staff who do a lot of core teaching in departments see on average 4.2% of students' tuition fees". We used a Facebook group, consisting of around 100 colleagues, as a rapid way of sourcing information, collectively editing statements (using Google Docs), and checking facts.

We didn't, however, anticipate the massive response that we received. The account gained over 1000 followers in just two days, which led to two articles in the student news outlets The Tab and Palatinate. The experience of casualised academics in Durham outraged students and struck a chord with colleagues in a similar position throughout the UK. Within just a few weeks, the university responded by scrapping 9 month contracts—a rule that was, until then, apparently set in stone at faculty level. Despite this success, however, there is still more work to do: colleagues on hourly-paid contracts are still being exploited, 10 month contracts still exist, and short-term teaching positions are still being capped at 23 months, just one month shy of the point at which an employee accrues redundancy rights. We intend to continue our campaign, working alongside similar groups at Kent, Leeds, Warwick, Newcastle, and Cambridge, until casualised labour is no longer a necessary stepping-stone for embarking upon a career in academia, teaching, or university administration.

Win for Graduate Unionising
Steph Mawson, Cambridge UCU

Cambridge UCU Grads in the History Faculty are celebrating a full victory on their campaign to win recognition and pay for face-to-face teaching, ending a long-standing situation where teaching was called training and so went unpaid. A proposal passed at the Faculty Board meeting on 19 June 2018 established the firm precedent that all face-to-face teaching by grads will be paid, including all teaching undertaken within the Historical Argument and Practice paper. Additionally, all teaching jobs will be properly advertised ensuring equity of access for all grads. This is a major victory for union organising among graduate students – something which has rarely happened previously at Cambridge. In the space of just seven weeks the history grad community unionised and built a strong campaign, centring on a public forum and an open letter than attracted nearly 350 signatures. The campaign relied on a collective of two dozen grad union members. By winning this campaign, CUCU grads have established a precedent that we hope will be adopted across other sections of the university, improving working conditions for the graduate community as a whole.

Fractionals for Fair Play at SOAS
Carrie Benjamin, SOAS UCU

The Fractionals for Fair Play campaign (FFFP) was formed in January 2014 to fight for fair treatment and improved contractual conditions for fractional teaching staff at SOAS. When FFFP began, most fractionals – and in some cases all fractionals – were not paid for office hours, lecture attendance, mandatory teacher training, attendance at department meetings, or for marking essays. As part of the campaign, FFFP conducted two independent workload surveys, produced a campaign video that was adopted as a pedagogical tool by some lecturers, organised a 'Community Week of Action' with the Justice for Workers campaign and various student groups on campus, held teach-ins discussing casualisation in higher education, raised fractional issues at department meetings and staff-student forums, and discussed working conditions openly with students.

Through these publicity efforts, FFFP was able to reach a broad base of supportive students and staff members, who were quick to mobilise when fractional staff took unauthorised strike action by refusing to mark essays without remuneration in April 2014 and again in April 2017. During the action, students sent emails
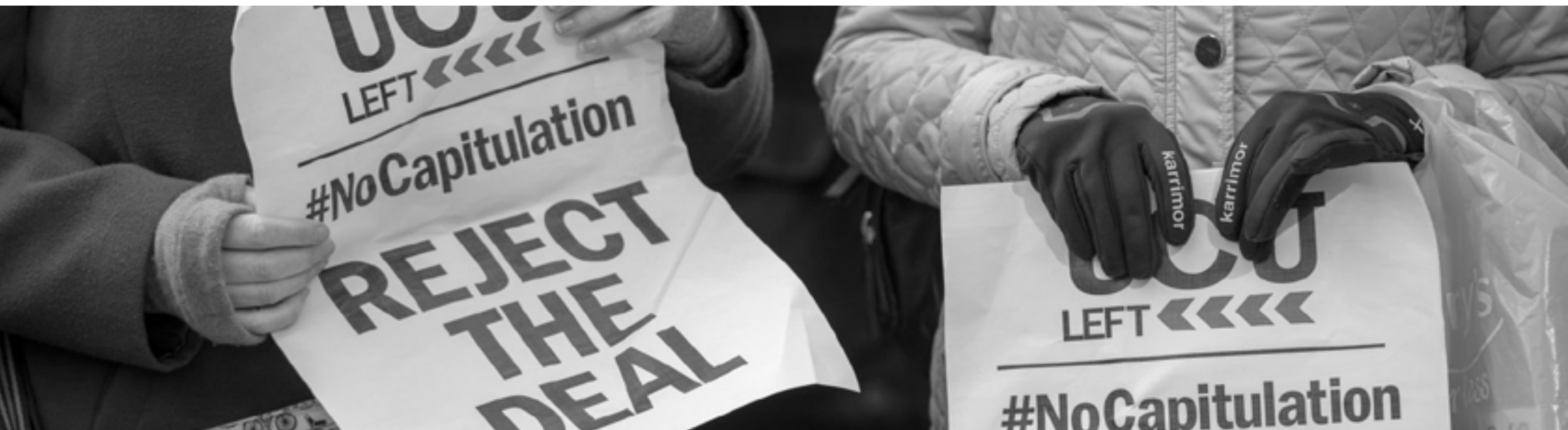
to senior managers in support of striking fractionals, and every department in SOAS wrote a statement condemning the treatment of fractional staff, demanding that the school remunerate us for marking, and refusing to mark their fractionals' essays. This was crucial, as without the support of permanent staff the strike would have collapsed. It was also important for fractional staff themselves to meet continuously and go through the arguments with each other in order to ensure that the marking boycott was solid enough to pull off collectively. A critical mass was vital. The action ended in victory.

Today, as a result of over three years of mobilisation and action by FFFP, fractional staff at SOAS are now paid for training, essay marking, administration, and have access to designated research funds from the institution. There is a persistent belief that precarious teaching contracts are a rite of passage that all academics must endure. Part of FFFP's success came through persistent engagement and challenging these narratives, and by building solidarity networks with staff and students in the institution.

Checklist:

1. Does your branch have one or more anti-casualisation officer/s? ☐

2. Does your branch actively recruit precariously employed staff? ☐

3. Is all planned, scheduled teaching in your university delivered by staff engaged on employment contracts (as opposed to casual worker engagements)? ☐

4. Have you done a department by department audit of casualised staff and how much of their time is spent on course preparation, office hours and marking? ☐

5. Are casualised staff paid to attend meetings and lectures? ☐

6. Are graduate teaching assistants paid to do mandatory training? ☐

7. Has your branch campaigned for an end to 9-month contracts? ☐

8. Does your branch monitor and enforce the issuing of contracts in a timely manner? ☐

9. Is there a campaign in your branch to publicise the pay and conditions of casualised staff (how much they are paid to mark essays eg)? ☐

10. Are graduate teaching assistant jobs advertised and is the appointments process fair and transparent? ☐

III: Equalities

- FIGHTING RACISM
- FIGHTING ABLEISM
- FIGHTING GENDER DISCRIMINATION

UK universities are, to put it mildly, far from egalitarian spaces. They preside over a number of scandals including a gender pay gap, institutional racism (highlighted by the tiny numbers of BME staff at the highest levels), sexual harassment and barriers to promotion for disabled staff. Equalities campaigning needs to be embedded in the work of activist branches if we're to secure open and non-discriminatory campuses.

FIGHTING RACISM

Pointers for Fighting Racism
Kirsten Forkert, Birmingham City University UCU

It important for the committee, school reps, caseworkers etc. to be representative and inclusive, so that there are people with some understanding and experience of the issues that all members face and not only white members.

It is crucial that the union isn't perceived as a white organisation. I've noticed that I often get approached by Black or Asian female members for casework support, and unfortunately there are a lot of these requests which is a worrying pattern. This is why it's important to encourage as diverse a group of people as possible to be involved as caseworkers.

It's also important to identify patterns - like are particular demographics of staff disproportionately needing support etc. - this is about identifying collective issues.

It is also crucial that the facility agreements recognise that this is often to be the case and that people (and union reps) of colour will often carry a heavier load.

WITNESS Project

Initiated by UCU Black Members' Standing Committee, 'witness' chronicles the lived experiences of UCU black members in post-16 education. This video is available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGOMEXQe63E to screen on campuses.

The resources from the Witness project and the day of action against workplace racism (which is annual national day of action) give very important background on the issues that are currently facing members of colour. There's a survey with both stats and quotes, and there's also a film which can be screened to train union members about the issues facing colleagues.

We are Unis Resist Border Controls

Unis Resist Border Controls (URBC) was formed in March 2016 in at a conference called by the Justice4Sanaz campaign to address the growing border controls inside higher education. URBC is a national campaign made up of an international collective of university students, lecturers, and university workers based in Brighton, London and Manchester. We are migrant-led, and our politics is rooted in an intersectional feminist approach. We are are committed to fighting the Conservatives' hostile environment policy in UK universities and have a 8 point manifesto that calls for free education, free movement, an end to surveillance of students and staff, and an end to universities working with and investing in industries that are responsible for war and environmental devastation that in turn forces people to flee and become refugees.

In the over two years since URBC was formed, we have focused on two issues: educational outreach and preventing the deportation of non-EEA (Tier 4) international students. Regarding the former, we have given "resistance workshops" at UCU branches, student groups, migrant-rights and DIY spaces in England and Scotland to educate people about the hostile environment policy and everyday bordering in higher education. Additional education outreach is provided by our 'zines and social media. Regarding the latter, URBC has been instrumental in preventing the deportation of students, most notably in the cases of Shiromini Satkunarajah and Ahmed Sedeeq. We also played a vital role this summer in getting UCL to retract a proposed policy and apologise to their academic staff after management had sent around a threatening email indicating that failure to comply with attendance monitoring for Tier 4 (non-EEA) international students would result in a fine of "£20,000 per case". In all these cases, we provided a venue where students and staff could report injustices and emergencies, and then were able to quickly publicise the case to the media networks we've built and get rapid mainstream press coverage for the cases, while also working more covertly to put students and staff in touch with our contacts in the legal community.

We urge all academic staff and students who are concerned about border controls on their campuses to join URBC and get involved in our national campaign to stop the hostile environment policy that is marginalising so many of our migrant colleagues and students! #BordersKillKnowledge

Facebook: @UnisResist.BorderControls
Twitter: @UnisNotBorders
E-mail: UnisResistBorderControls@gmail.com

UK PROFESSORS BY ETHNIC GROUP

White 91.6%
Asian 3.3%
Chinese 2.0%
Other 1.3%
Mixed 1.1%
Black 0.6%

6: UK professors by ethnic group, 2016-17

●●AdvanceHE   Advance HE (2018) Equality in higher education statistical reports - weighted by full person equivalent   #AdvanceHEstats

Universities of Sanctuary

The idea of 'Universities of Sanctuary' has developed out of the 'City of Sanctuary' movement. In the UK there are over 80 Cities of Sanctuary initiatives in towns, cities, villages, counties and boroughs with the purpose of creating a culture of welcome and hospitality at the local level. The idea of Universities of Sanctuary is not new, but has become an increasing focus since concerns over the Syrian refugee crisis from September 2015 in particular. Universities, as well as students and staff, have increasingly sought ways to make their university more accessible and welcoming to asylum seekers and refugees. The initiative offers an umbrella under which a wide range of activities can be undertaken.

Several universities currently offer sanctuary scholarships (including Reading and Bristol), the Universities of Bradford, Sheffield, Hull, Easy Anglia, Warwick, York St John, and Edinburgh have been recognised as Universities of Sanctuary in 2017-18.

Sanctuary awards are provided by the network of local groups and City of Sanctuary. Any community group, private organisation, public sector service or other bodies which contribute towards the vision of welcome can apply for the award by signing up to City of Sanctuary's charter values and principles and demonstrating their commitment to:
• The creation of safe places across every sphere and sector of society
• Promotion of the voices and celebration of the contributions of people seeking sanctuary
• Increased understanding of why people seek sanctuary and the difficulties they experience whilst in the UK
• Increasing the collective voice of the network, to advocate for and alongside sanctuary seekers
• Celebrating good practice and encouraging reflection on how practice can be improved.

Guidance for application for University of Sanctuary awards can be found here: cityofsanctuary.org/awards/

Preventing 'Prevent'
Sai Englert, SOAS UCU

The Preventing Prevent campaign at SOAS brings together students, academics, and non-academic staff who reject the implementation of the Prevent policy in our university. It argues that this policy shuts down the political space on campus (and in wider society), undermines civil liberties, and weakens the solidarity between staff and students, by attempting to normalise the criminalisation of thought and turn university staff into extensions of state surveillance.

The campaign has taken place, broadly speaking, in two separate stages. It was first launched around 2015 with the introduction of the government's Counter Terrorism and Security Act (CSTA), which made it a legal obligation for university staff to report on the so-called radicalisation of students. At that time, the campaign focussed on winning an ideological argument on campus against the logic of Prevent. It took place simultaneously within all three unions – UCU, UNISON, and the Students' Union – in order to build a wide front across campus. They all passed motions rejecting the implementation of the policy on campus and committing themselves to boycotting any activity relating to it. The campaign was focussed on winning a political argument at the time, as there was not yet any practical implementation of the Prevent policy at SOAS.

The second stage of the campaign started this last academic year and is still ongoing. Under considerable and sustained pressure from HEFCE, which used the growing 'best practice' across the sector as leverage, management has moved to change its external speaker policy while also committing to training all student-facing staff. This Prevent training is to be imposed on staff without consultation with any of the campus-based unions. The campaign has responded by setting up an alternative training session, which gave staff and students the facts about Prevent both in higher education and more broadly, while also calling for a boycott of

the training sessions. This position is still supported by the three unions. It is also planning to roll out the alternative training sessions with specific groups of workers, in different departments, and with students at the beginning of the new term.

These activities are being supplemented with a School-wide pledge to boycott Prevent, and a series of public meetings to continue to raise awareness about the policy and its consequences. The question of defeating Prevent through civil disobedience, which a boycott campaign is, cannot succeed in isolation on one campus however. The policy has been discredited by many public bodies and academics, but has not yet been successfully challenged in practice. If we are to be successful at SOAS, we will need colleagues and students across the sector to join us and refuse to participate.

FIGHTING ABLEISM

UCU branches should all have in place an Equalities rep who works with the branch and the Health and Safety Rep to campaign for accessible and inclusive workplaces. Last year, UCU produced a Disability Toolkit for branches and members which was in part based on the TUC's Disability Equality manifesto. Here are some basic ways in which branches can make the workplace accessible to all:

1. Reasonable adjustments

Has your employer organised training? Have you had difficulties getting adjustments agreed? Have you had to wait for adjustments to be implemented? If you have had to wait for adjustments to be made, how long was this? Have there been attempts to change or remove your adjustments?

2. Access to Work fund

What training is in place that staff, managers and leaders receive on disability issues? Does your employer know about the Access to Work fund? Have you had cuts made to your Access to Work support?

3. Training standard

What training is in place that staff, managers and leaders receive on disability issues?

4. A fair assessment system for benefits

What training is in place that staff, managers and leaders receive on disability issues?

5. Access to transport

 Do you have challenges with public transport to work? Has lack of parking spaces (disabled or non-disabled spaces) hindered your access to work?

6. Independent living, care and work

Does your employer support carers or understand through surveys or consultation how many staff are carers? Is there a workplace policy? How have changes to care support and the closure of the independent living fund affected you?

7. Access to education

How have the changes to disabled students allowance affected students at your institution? Are disabled students disappearing from your college due to lack of additional support or access to apprenticeship schemes?

MOST COMMON IMPAIRMENT TYPES AMONG STAFF WHO DISCLOSED AS DISABLED

24.6% Long standing illness or health condition

20.8% Specific learning disability

11.8% Mental health condition

9.2% Physical impairment or mobility issues

4: Most common impairment types among staff who disclosed as disabled, 2016-17

AdvanceHE Advance HE (2018) Equality in higher education statistical reports - weighted by full person equivalent #AdvanceHEstats

FIGHTING GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Although equal pay legislation has been in place for over 40 years, the gender pay gap in Britain remains the highest in the European Union at over 18%. In higher education, for all academics the gender pay gap is 12%. A recent UCU Report says that there are many reasons why the gender pay gap exists, including discrimination against women in the workplace, discrimination in pay systems, the value placed on work predominantly undertaken by women and interrupted careers.

In 2017, female academics in the LSE were given salary increases aimed at redressing the gender pay gap, and at the University of Essex, female professors were moved three points up the pay scale to bring their salaries in line with male counterparts

The Parent Pay Gap

A report from 2018 by the Social Market Foundation (SMF) showed that working mothers earn nearly 20 percent less than working fathers 10 years after their first child was born. UCU branches can fight to end the gender pay gap that is a direct result of women becoming mothers through a number of measures. These include:

• Access to on campus childcare facilities and funding for childcare for out of hours work (Saturday Open Days, conferences and so on)
• Emergency time off – time off which is not taken from annual leave in order to care for a sick child.
• Research Only Semesters for women returning to work
• Addressing workload: (1) cutting back on the need to work at night and the weekends; (2) ending excessive workloads that force many women to go part-time, damaging overall earnings and pension contributions, and reproducing the gendered division of labour in the home.

Sarah James, Art History, UCL
At UCL, women returning from maternity leave are offered a one-term sabbatical. The policy was established to help women catch up with research after being on maternity leave, and although I think in some ways down to the HoD to approve, it can't really be rejected now it is established policy. It made a huge difference to me.
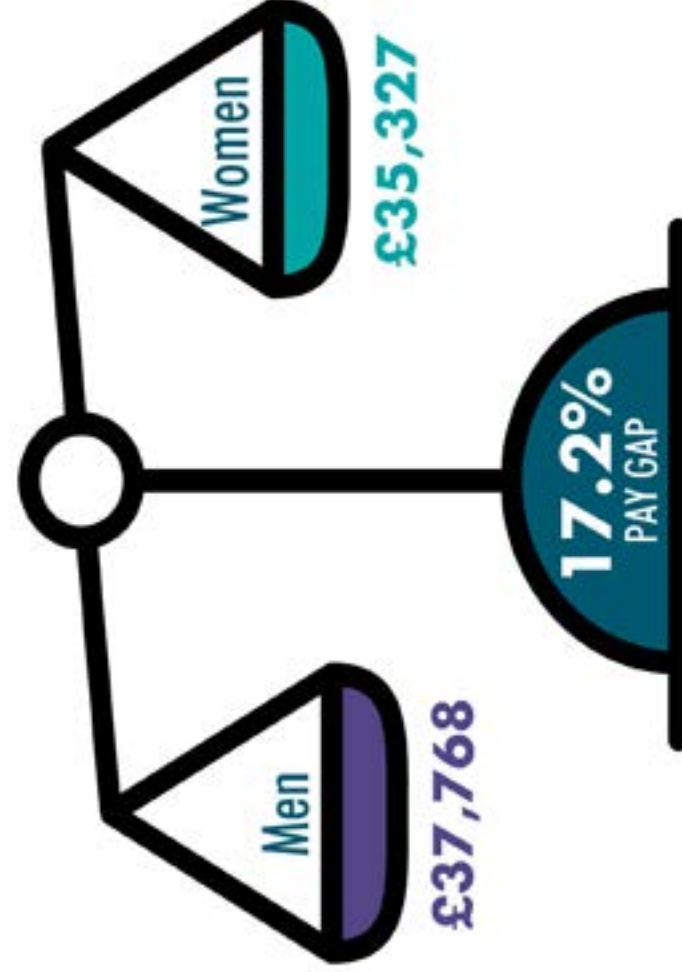

Who's holding the baby?

An exhibition on childcare by the Hackney Flashers Collective

Addressing the Gender Pay Gap at SOAS
Andrea Cornwall, SOAS, University of London

SOAS has one of the lowest gender pay gaps in the sector at 9.8% and falling, down from 13.5% in 2009. Our aim is to work towards the eradication of any disparity in the pay received by people of different genders, recognising discrimination in the workplace also extends to gender identity and expression, and to those who identify as trans and non-binary. Mindful that gender is not the only difference, we have made a commitment to analysing, monitoring and publishing our ethnicity pay gap in the same way as our gender pay gap.

Why do we at SOAS have almost half the gender pay gap of comparable institutions such as those in the Russell Group, which with an average pay gap of 16.3% are above the 14.1% of the sector as a whole? One answer is that we are not only led by a woman, we have more women in the senior team than any university in the country. Seeing women leading the organisation sends a signal that we are radically different from those universities in which a small club of white men sit at the top, protecting a culture that lacks openness to diversity or difference.

To make further progress, SOAS has put in place measures to address recruitment (the Athena Swan Charter and action plan), promotion and workplace policies to remove barriers faced by academic and professional staff with caring responsibilities (Family Friendly Review, which includes enhanced maternity pay, enhanced adoption, and surrogacy pay; enhanced shared parental leave and pay; emergency care payments), along with commitment to increase the proportion of women with full-time academic contracts, who are professors and on higher professorial grades and the proportion of BME women holding permanent academic contracts. We see parity in pay by gender to be everyone's issue, and will continue with these efforts until the gender pay gap is history.

MEAN GENDER PAY GAP

Women
£35,327

17.2%
PAY GAP

Men
£37,768

24: Mean pay gap by gender for all university staff, 2016-17

AdvanceHE

Sexual Harassment

UCU recently launched a central helpline to provide support to those experiencing sexual harassment and any reps who may want counselling support in supporting members at branch level.

Any member who has concerns or is experiencing sexual harassment can call 0800 138 8724 in confidence, free of charge and 24/7 to talk about their experience, discuss options, receive counselling (if clinically appropriate) and details of further sources of support, if necessary.

The helpline is an opportunity to discuss confidentiality your experience and talk through what you want to do next which may include asking your branch to support you take action against your employer. Many branches are now creating a named contact for sexual harassment cases.

Sheffield UCU work with the Freedom Programme to Tackle Domestic Abuse

Sheffield UCU and Sheffield Students' Union have partnered with the Freedom Programe to offer a course on the effects of domestic abuse.

Who is it for?

The Freedom Programme is open to all women (cis, trans, and/or non-binary) and those who have complex gender indentity including woman, who have directly or indirectly had experience of Domestic Abuse.

What is it about?

Understanding the beliefs held by abusive partners, Feeling empowered to make more confident choices to address abusive situations; Recognising the effects of Domestic Abuse in adults and children; Recognising potential abusers.

Checklist

1. Is your branch representative and inclusive and is there a diverse range of caseworkers? ☐

2. Does your branch have a BAME rep and an Equalities rep? ☐

3. Does your branch track patterns in casework to identify demographics who may be disproportionately needing support? ☐

4. Has your branch hosted a Day of Action against Racism? ☐

5. Are members in your branch aware of the most recent UKVI rules and have officers and resources in place to support migrant staff and students? ☐

6. Has your branch hosted meetings of all members to discuss issues and approaches to Decolonising Education and is the branch working with their local student union on Liberate the Curriculum initiatives? ☐

7. Has your branch considered working toward University of Sanctuary Award? ☐

8. Has your branch taken steps to enable all staff to understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity? ☐

9. Has your branch done an equalities audit of gender pay gap in your institution and proposed campaigns to remedy it? ☐

10. Has your branch created a named contact for cases of sexual harassment? ☐

IV: Activist Care

Health and safety is one of the few areas where branches have statutory rights but what is an activist health and safety policy? What issues should it cover and how can we convince management that, for example, mental health and stress are issues that need to be taken seriously in order to protect members at work.

Ensuring Health & Safety at Bournemouth
Marian Mayer, Vice-Chair and H&S Rep,
Bournemouth UCU

In 2017 our H&S reps attended health & safety training facilitated by an accredited TUC trainer and the UCU's head of health, safety and sustainability. We returned to our branch with a fully informed campaign, employing H&S legal frameworks and guidance and advice published by the union. On 22 September 2017 we informed the chair of the university's Health and Safety committee that we were seeking a review of its Terms of Reference. This was because the composition of the committee was heavily loaded in favour of the employer. We gave sufficient advance notice with a suggestion that both recognised unions, UCU and Unison, meet with the employer to negotiate the ToRs.

Our first email was met with short shrift. Undeterred, we continued to press the organisation, citing the Unite/TUC Brown Book, the definitive guide to codes of practice relating to H&S Committees. Recommended reading!

There followed nine months of intense negotiations and consultation with the chair of the committee. Union representatives and officials met frequently throughout this period and immediately prior to every meeting with the employers' representatives to discuss and agree our strategy and tactics. Finally, on 16 April 2018. We reached an agreement on equal representation on the committee and statutory facilities time for H&S reps, which we understood would be ratified with both unions the following day.

The employer then attempted to renege on the agreement and so, as we had previously decided, we twice walked out of the Joint Negotiation and Consultation meeting to allow the employer's committee members 'time to reflect'. Eventually, the previous day's agreement was ratified.

I cannot emphasise strongly enough how important planning for these meetings were in achieving our goal of equal representation on the committee.

The culmination of our negotiations is that we now have equal representation on the H&S committee (we are still working on the revolving chair) and we have at the same time successfully negotiated additional statutory facilities time. This was done by appointing all of the branch exec, together with two co-opted members, as H&S reps, 11 in total. Currently, in addition to 0.4 FTE statutory facility time (separate to our branch FTE) we have 0.5 FTE pro tem statutory facility time to undertake four inspections this year.

Events have not always run smoothly. For example, the employer attempted again to renege on agreements and hold our first meeting under the previous rather than new ToR's claiming that the loaded committee needed to ratify the new ToR's. We held firm. There was a point at which it was touch- and-go and our plan was to ask whether this might be a good look for the University. In the final event it wasn't necessary.

With further training from our regional support official, we have devised a campaign, based on the UCU work-related stress hazards model survey, and will shortly be piloting H&S inspections focusing on workloads and stress. We plan to follow this with local inspections in labs and further inspections in 'hotspots' where we know members have H&S concerns. Please contact me if you want to see any of the correspondence between UCU and management.

- Time, space and resources to be provided for inviting radical practitioners and therapists to share their practices with us, so we may begin to build a hybrid model suited to our campus-wide as well as individual-level struggles in a way that is honest about and sensitive to their socio-economic and institutional causes.

Realisation

- An independent student-staff inquiry group should be set up, with funding from the university, and without specific targets or outcome measures, to address mental health provision at Goldsmiths;

- Greater attention needs to be paid to the academic and administrative structures that contribute to stress and declining mental health, in order to develop appropriate support for both staff and students;

- Greater clarity about the chain of referral for mental health support for both staff and students, without this meaning standardisation;

- Attention to other basic conditions on campus as factors in mental health, e.g. prioritising affordable, quality housing and provision of healthy food: Basic amenities before luxuries!

- On-campus, in-house and full-time health services able to offer treatments for simple maladies as well as writing repeat or one-off prescriptions for urgently required medicines;

- Dedicated common areas for academic departments, developed with staff and students to best suit their needs.

A Peoples' Tribunal: What has Happened to Our University?

In December 2015, Goldsmiths held a 'People's Tribunal' to analyse what had happened to the university 5 years after the vote in parliament to marketise education. For the tribunal case on mental health, Mark Fisher, then a lecturer in the Department of Visual Cultures, made a recording about staff mental health as a piece of evidence:

"How can lecturers support stressed students when we too are so overstressed? Ever since 2010, a wave of panic has spread through higher education. In place of management there has been a series of frantic gestures, mechanical reflexes, threatening postures. The message arising from the frenzy has been clear and unrelenting; work harder, work longer, do more administration, more marketing, or you won't have a job anymore. Teaching and learning are the last things on lecturers' minds as we are required to become hawkers and hucksters plugging the gaps in funding. The position is plain, reading and thinking are luxuries universities can't afford to pay for anymore. But if we don't have time to think, who does? Everyone bends under the pressure. Some crack, fatally.

An Imperial College professor commits suicide because he fails to bring in enough revenue from research. Many others must be on the brink. Our overpaid superiors pretend to read PDFs whilst colleges and universities fall apart. They are engaged in something called 'management', but this doesn't seem to have much to do with maintaining an environment in which learning can take place. What they are doing is much more important than that, we are led to believe. At Goldsmiths, surges in undergraduate numbers are not matched by adequate rooming. Students pay £9000 a year to sit on stairs. A new member of staff says she has blacked out the window on her office door so she can sleep and cry. We cower in our offices, experiencing our inability to cope with the impossible workload as our personal failure and shame, telling each other that there is no time to talk."

Mark Fisher (1968-2017)

54

EMANCIPATORY POLITICS MUST ALWAYS DESTROY THE APPEARANCE OF A 'NATURAL ORDER', MUST REVEAL WHAT IS PRESENTED AS NECESSARY AND INEVITABLE TO BE A MERE CONTINGENCY, JUST AS IT MUST MAKE WHAT WAS PREVIOUSLY DEEMED TO BE IMPOSSIBLE SEEM ATTAINABLE.

MARK FISHER (1968-2017)

Checklist

1. Does your branch have active health and safety reps and have they received recent training in legal frameworks and guidance?

2. Do UCU and other union health and safety officers have equal representation with employers on University health and safety committees and is there a revolving chair?

3. Are issues around mental health and workload stress discussed in your branch under health and safety and are these issues explicitly connected to working conditions in your university?

4. Can your branch conduct health and safety inspections, including inspections of stress and mental health?

5. Is there access to occupational health, counseling and mentoring for staff in your branch? Are staff consulted on the nature and suitability of this provision?

6. Is staff training available on mental health first aid and suicide prevention?

Overwork is an unacceptable but all too common aspect of university life. Lecturers, researchers, administrators and support staff regularly work beyond expected hours and, increasingly, being asked to take on the work of absent colleagues. How can we take back control of our workloads and ensure a safe and productive work/life balance?

V: Workload

11 Principles for Workload Modelling
James Thompson, Bristol UCU

1. Workload models should measure time.
A good model does not 'incentivise' behaviours by weighing some tasks more heavily than others, regardless of the relative time required to complete them, on the grounds that some tasks are more profitable than others.

2. The currency of the model should be hours not percentages.

3. The hours assigned to tasks should be realistic.

Hours allocated should reflect the time needed for a member of staff do the task properly. This is best determined through discussion with staff. This approach is both rooted in the reality of how long work takes while also providing a useful yardstick to staff: if the marking is taking much less time than the model suggests, you are probably not doing it properly; if it is taking far longer, you may be providing more feedback than is actually useful to a student.

4. The aim is to capture the full workload.
As well as realistically modelling time required to perform a given duty, the model should seek to capture the full range of duties. This does not mean that a model should claim to be exhaustive as some important aspects of academic life, such as a student coming to see a member of staff outside consultation hours, cannot be predicted in advance. Workload models should, therefore include an allowance for this type of unscheduled activity.

5. The workload model should be developed to the highest standards of equality, diversity and inclusion.
Staff often note the tendency of workload models to undercount the time involved in certain activities: teaching; teaching management; personal tutoring. By contrast some work is rarely undercounted – consultation with staff suggests research management roles are usually appropriately weighted. There is here a gendered pattern: roles that are under-counted are those disproportionately undertaken by women.

6. The workload model should be transparent and shared amongst those whose workload it captures.

7. The details of costings (eg how many hours does it take to supervise a PhD student in Chemistry?) should be built from 'the bottom up' through discussion amongst staff in the relevant unit.

8. Models should explicitly include time for research and for scholarship/pedagogy.

9. Buy out for research should not be secured by reducing research time for others.

10. Where possible, there should be a single model at an appropriate level (ie Faculty or School).

The Workload Problem
Dr Marianne O'Doherty

In a blog post during the UCU pension strike, Dr Marianne O'Doherty Associate Professor in English at the University of Southampton, commented that her most frequent conversations in corridors with colleagues was about workload.

She said, 'they repeatedly tell me a that they had no weekend because they worked a Saturday visit day then marked all day Sunday; they tell me that they marked until 4am then got up early to give a 9.00 lecture; they tell me that they got forty minutes sleep the night before a marks return deadline. They tell me that if they turn away from their email for a day to get a core part of their job (like, y'know, teaching) done, their inbox mushrooms out of control. They tell me that they can't go on doing this; it's physically and mentally harming them.'

She adds, that in private, colleagues tell her how their workload 'has damaged their family lives. "I haven't seen my youngest child for three days", a colleague once told me'.

Others have shared that they have felt pressure to choose between the job and their marriage.'

This is what increased student numbers, increased teaching loads, admin loads and marketing for our Universities looks like. We know that colleagues are breaking under the pressure.

8. Are you experiencing, or have you experienced any of these stress symptoms in the last year?

	Never	Sometimes	Often
		Please Circle	
a. Headaches/migraine	1	2	3
b. Aches and pains	1	2	3
c. High blood pressure	1	2	3
d. Poor sleep patterns	1	2	3
e. Skin Rashes	1	2	3
f. Indigestion	1	2	3
g. Stomach ulcers	1	2	3
h. Asthma	1	2	3
i. Anxiety	1	2	3

In 2011 UCU published a 'stress toolkit' below are five key points to address stress in the workplace and some tools to monitor working time and stress related symptoms.

https://www.ucu.org.uk/stress

Finding out About Stress

1. Ensure basic risk assessments are properly conducted, and include the identification of stress-related issues as one element.

2. Where the basic assessment indicates there is or may be a problem, conduct a specific stress risk assessment to determine more fully the extent and causes of work-related stress. The HSE Indicator Tool produces convincing data, and is independent. See http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/index.htm. UCU can help you set this up.

3. Ensure that trade union reps are involved in the risk assessment process, to monitor and constructively criticise the process, ensure all risks are identified and proposed control measures appropriate.

4. Identify where workers are already suffering from work-related stress. Ensure employers collect and present sickness absence figures in ways that enable any absence 'hot spots' and causes to be identified. Encourage everyone to record accurately the reasons for absence – some are reluctant to have 'work-related stress' or 'stress-related illness' as a cause on a medical certificate.

5. Encourage employees to report stress-related issues to both the union and the employer. Ensure the employer has a non-threatening procedure and environment for such reports. Consider establishing a special procedure for this if necessary, as many employers have for reporting bullying. Focus groups are the forum suggested by the HSE - there should be trade union input into focus group meetings.

![UCU University and College Union logo]

CLASSROOM/WORKSHOP TEACHING MONITORING

DAY		COURSE	SUBJECT	CONTACT	PREP	ASSESS	ADMIN	TOTAL
Mon	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							
	5							
	6							
Tues	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							
	5							
	6							
Wed	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							
	5							
	6							
Thurs	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							
	5							
	6							
Fri	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							
	5							
	6							
Total Hours								
Other Directed Time								

TASKS	PREP	REPORTS	ADMIN	OTHER	TOTAL HOURS
Team meetings					
Inspection work					
Staff development					
TOTAL WEEKLY WORKLOAD					

Extracts from Open Letter from Cardiff University Staff to the Vice-Chancellor, members of the University Executive Board and Cardiff University Council, July 2018

We are a community of university staff. We care about the welfare of our colleagues. Our concern has reached crisis point following the recent suicide of Dr Anderson, a member of our community. This is the second suicide for work-related reasons at Cardiff in four years. Another friend and colleague, Dr Jervis, took his own life in March 2014. We will not countenance losing anyone else.

Let us first address the immediate situation. We are aware that some colleagues are suffering from the adverse effects of high work pressure and that it is impacting on their mental and physical health. If you are one of these people, please speak to someone. Care First (the provider of Cardiff University's Employee Assistance Programme), provides crisis support and a counselling service. Freephone 0800174319, Int: +44 (0)1452 623243 with support available 24/7. UCU has a team of caseworkers, and reps in most Schools and Departments. The Education Support Partnership offers free support and counselling for all staff in education by telephone, email and live chat (details at https://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/). Additionally, although we sometimes don't realise it, we have many great colleagues who care, and will support us. Talk to one another. If you feel more comfortable talking to people outside of your school, there are now a range of groups you can join to connect with members of an increasingly vibrant Cardiff University community. Three grassroots staff-led initiatives have developed over the last year that we can recommend joining, "Common Room" events (click https://tinyurl.com/y9nszwcp to request to join), Professors at Cardiff (Professorial members of staff, click https://tinyurl.com/ya7uj6ya to request to join), Frontline (open to all staff, click https://tinyurl.com/ya6ymnf6 to request to join) as well as meeting with other staff at Cardiff UCU events and meetings (complete the online UCU form at https://www.ucu.org.uk/join or email ucu@cardiff.ac.uk for more info).

Secondly, we wish to take action to change our working environment. Below is an open letter to the Vice-Chancellor, the University Executive Board (UEB) and University Council. It is an expression of our concern over the failure of our leaders and governors to address the long- standing and systemic problem of excessive workload. We are asking Cardiff University leadership to take decisive and effective action to address the serious problems around workload.

(With thanks to Cardiff UCU.)

Checklist

1. Has your branch carried out a workload questionnaire?

2. Have you encouraged members to keep detailed records or 'snapshots' of their daily activities?

3. Are staff actively involved in determining how much time certain tasks take and what the full range of activity in a given post or administrative position actually is?

4. Does your branch note tendencies in over-counting and under-counting certain kinds of work and track inequalities and gender biases in this counting?

5. Is your workload model transparent, shared and regularly reviewed?

6. Is your branch involved in stress risk assessments at work?

7. Does your branch track workload issues through job satisfaction surveys conducted by the university?

Metrics are increasingly shaping, and undermining, our working lives in academia. New government initiatives are coming on-stream that embed pernicious and inappropriate uses of data into auditing exercises that have little to say about teaching and learning but are a key part of the shift to a more managerialist and financialized academic system.

VI: Fighting the REF and TEF

Damned Metrics
John Holmwood, Nottingham UCU

Audit has shifted from being a government-produced device to provide transparency to a managerial device to ensure corporate goals in a competitive higher education market. For example, most UK universities operate local 'shadow' exercises to mirror the 'national' exercises. Whereas the latter take place every 5-7 years, with most institutions in the past conducting a shadow exercise in the year before, now institutions are conducting continuous readiness exercises including the use of metrics to calibrate local judgements. Moreover, where the national exercises anonymise their outcomes, local shadow exercises are not anonymous and are associated with performance management of individuals. This includes changing their contracts – for example, from research and teaching to teaching only.

In fact, the impact of the digitalisation of audit goes further. It facilitates the separation of teaching and research functions and the independent management of each with far-reaching consequences for staff precarity. Marketisation includes the opening-up of the sector to for-profit providers. Notwithstanding the neo-liberal representation of public universities as forming a cartel, for-profit providers include some of the largest transnational corporations – for example, Pearson, Apollo Group and Kaplan. Pearson, for example, is larger than English universities put together.

Most for-profit providers utilise online materials, which they combine with face to face support at local centres. It is the combination of the two that represents the saleable commodity. This depends upon available content which can be provided at scale. An example will illustrate the real problem facing traditional universities and their modes of traditional autonomy.

Let us take the example of an undergraduate degree in sociology available at all universities within a public system of higher education, by, say, 65 different universities. Each department of sociology currently develops its own curriculum taught by staff on research and teaching contracts, though there may be some teaching adjuncts to help deliver large classes. The degree is typically provided at each institution via lectures and seminars. Now imagine one large transnational for-profit provider. It has resources to develop a sociology curriculum centrally – these resources include the overall curriculum itself, as well as integrated online packages of material. These packages may include filmed lecture material and documentary elements, invited specialist or academic 'celebrity' segments, as well as links to online reading. At the same time, tutorial support is provided at centres conveniently located close to student audiences. These can mirror the provision at each individual traditional university, as well as going to smaller centres that are not usually able to support a full university.

Now imagine, the tech-savvy introduction of new technology at the traditional university. The Pro-Vice Chancellor for the 'Student Experience' has already promoted the development of an on-line platform for all teaching material, including the submission and marking of all assessments, and has arranged for the installation of lecture capture in all lecture theatres to record lectures. In principle, there now need be no real difference between the traditional university and the for-profit provider from the point of view of the student experience – each delivers teaching online with face-to-face tutorial support.

Boycotting Rankings
Stephan Lessnich, LMU - Munich

In 2013, The German Sociological Association (GSA) took a stand against what they called 'academic capitalism' by boycotting the 2013 CHE (Center for the Development of Higher Education) ranking, which is the most influential ranking in the German- speaking world. In a press release by Klaus Dörre, Stephan Lessenich, and Ingo Singe, then at Friedrich-Schiller-University of Jena Germany, said that the boycott intended to resist the new entrepreneurial university that is managed like a private enterprise primarily through the instruments of university department rankings and league tables. They rejected the bias toward quantitative performance indicators (research funding, number of doctorates and graduates, and so on) and the neglect of qualitative criteria. They sought to stop the logic of escalation inherent in performance measurement exercises ("more and more and never enough"), resulting in work intensification, stress and overload amongst all groups of the academic workforce and the negative effects this has on the quality of research and teaching.

The German Sociological Association (GSA) called upon departments, lecturers and students not to participate in the CHE-ranking. The initiative was first taken by the Institute of Sociology at the Friedrich-Schiller University in Jena, which critically, had been ranked amongst the best in the league tables. The department's resolution stated: "The new 2011/12 CHE Ranking, published in Die ZEIT, has ranked the Institute of Sociology at the Friedrich-Schiller-University at a top position. We are pleased about this expression of appreciation of our work. However, we are deeply skeptical about the instrument of university ranking as such. We consider the information value of the CHE ranking to be low [...]." They stated that 'first and foremost, ranking universities serves as an instrument for establishing competitive cultures in academia. It systematically produces winners and losers but does not help to improve the quality of scientific work. The Institute of Sociology therefore is planning not to take part in the next round of this
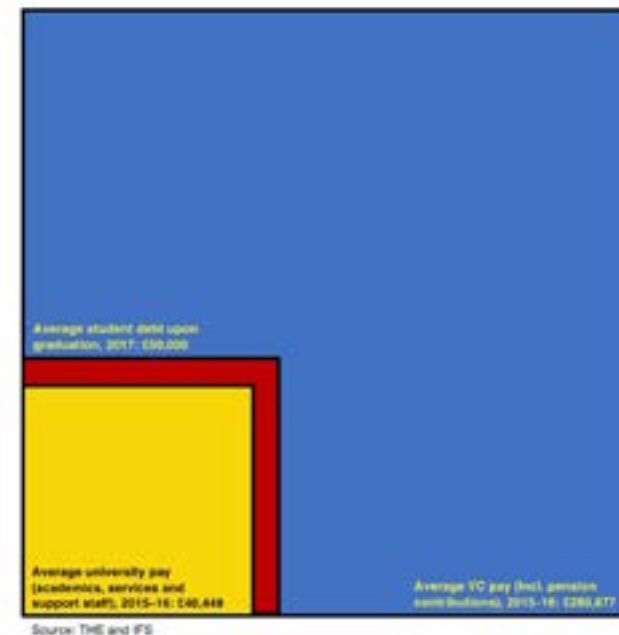
competition. [...]"

The boycott was widely covered in the press, and was supported by other disciplines - historians, english literary scholars, chemists, pedagogues, and political scientists also decided not to partake in the CHE ranking. In 2012, the GSA's board decided to establish an alternative, exclusively descriptive information system for students. It has also decided to set up a working group called "Task Force Studiengangsevaluation" which is to discuss alternative ways to establish valid evaluation mechanisms. Sociologists from Jena, and indeed Germany, are appealing to the international scientific community to follow suit and boycott rankings.

Campaigning Against Metrics-based Management
Bruce Baker, chair, Newcastle UCU

Between 2013 and 2016, Newcastle University's senior management tried to improve the university's research performance by implementing metrics-based management practices known as Raising the Bar (RTB), and in particular its Research and Performance Expectations (RiPE), that

Average student debt upon graduation, 2017: £50,000

Average university pay (academics, services and support staff), 2015-16: £40,648

Average VC pay (incl. pension contributions), 2015-16: £260,677

Source: THE and IFS

would have required fundamental changes to the nature and practice of academic labour. This led to widespread divisive unhappiness, upset, and opposition, culminating in successful industrial action taken by UCU in June 2016.

Raising the Bar was based on a two-fold carrot-and-stick approach to improving performance, by (i) managing individual performance through the use of "specific numerical targets" for publications, research students, impact case studies, and grant income and (ii) the development of a Research Excellence Support Framework to "help staff enhance their performance."
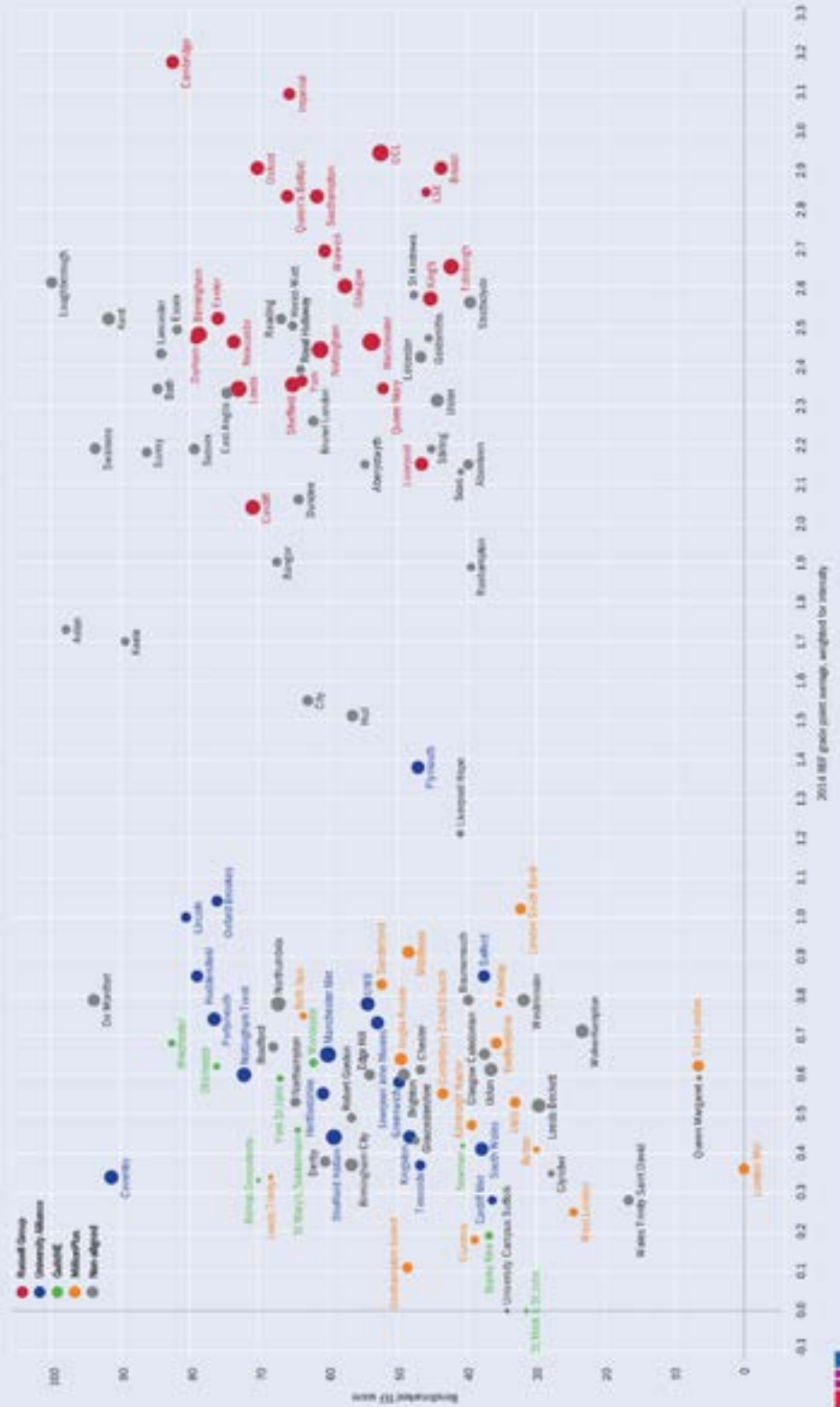
In October 2015, at a meeting all Heads of Academic Units (HoAU) were instructed immediately to "[e]mbed research expectation for Faculty in all academic recruitment" and implement RTB through the PDR (Performance and Development Review) process. This would involve a rapid assessment of each staff member through a traffic light system. Those flagged "red" would be subject to an "action plan for improvement" identifying appropriate "support and development" monitored by monthly reports, and leading to the commencement of "capability procedure[s]" should progress prove inadequate.

Tremendous unhappiness, upset and unease amongst staff increased, and, citing anonymous case-work, the UCU claimed that RTB was leading to a culture of bullying, and asked the VC to withdraw RiPE and discuss how we could improve research in a more collegial way. Groups of academics (at school/ unit level) sent letters to their Pro-Vice-Chancellors expressing disquiet, and a similar letter to the VC was signed eventually by 100 professors. UCU local reps organised meetings in their departments, and the branch also held meetings about the issue with students. We invited Liz Morrish to campus to speak. A UCU branch meeting on 28 October 2015 approved

an indicative ballot to see whether members would be willing to undertake industrial action and: in February 2016, the branch indicated its willingness to consider industrial action.

At the same time, management sought to formally engage UCU in discussion about RTB, and in March drew up a Memorandum of Understanding with UCU negotiators. The Branch Committee and branch meeting on March 3 rejected both this MOU and, on 23 May 2016, a subsequent one negotiated by ACAS, voting eventually to take Action Short of a Strike (ASOS) in the form of a marking boycott, authorised to begin on 3 June. This would disrupt graduation of final-year students, so was a serious step. In spite of this, the VC indicated that RTB would not be withdrawn, and the management wrote to staff threatening to deduct pay at a rate of 100% for non-completion of marking duties.

In the week that the industrial action began, the UCU Congress passed a solidarity motion recognising the Newcastle issue as "a local dispute of national significance." Newcastle UCU wrote to the VC offering an alternative to RTB, entitled Improving Research Together (IRT) and launched a petition on the campaigning website www.change.org ('Say no to coercive performance management at Newcastle University'). The campaign attracted international attention. In response to the industrial action, the VC called an emergency meeting on Friday 3 June, the day the industrial action began, where heads of academic units supported the withdrawal of RTB. On Monday 6 June, in negotiations with the UCU, management agreed to abandon RiPE and to ditch the RTB terminology. Management and the union agreed to "develop a common understanding and collegial approach to improving research," in a document entitled the Academic Framework for Research Improvement (AFRI). You can find the full report on the dispute here: http://newcastle.web.ucu.org.uk/raising-the-bar/.

TEF V REF: UNIVERSITIES' SCORES ON THE 2014 REF AND OUR MOCK TEF BENCHMARKED SCORES

timeshighereducation.com

Checklist

1. Has your branch fought for the separation of promotion opportunities from individual's performance in the REF?

2. Does your branch challenge the use of REF 'shadow exercises' for performance management, appraisal and promotion purposes?

3. Does your branch have clear policies on use of online teaching materials and 'lecture capture' videos?

4. Does your branch work with research committees and the Equalities rep to establish fair and transparent criteria for establishing reductions in outputs expected from staff who are disabled, or who have been ill, or on maternity or adoption leave?

5. Does your branch debate a boycott of the REF and strategise on how to do this with other branches?

6. Does your branch work with the Student Union on campaigns to challenge the TEF?

VII: Fighting Re-dundancies

There appears to be no contradiction between the huge surpluses that universities are making and the fact that many are making job cuts. Huge numbers of people have been made redundant through both compulsory and voluntary means in the last few years. These job cuts range from punitive acts enforced on individuals (including activists and those who faces 'no longer fit') to a slow and steady stream of members leaving or being forced out and not being replaced; from announcements of jobs 'at risk' through to wholesale redundancies even at those institutions with healthy revenue and reserves. Activists are here to protect jobs and not to negotiate with the employers about how best to cut jobs and we can learn from some of the ongoing and recent struggles against redundancies.

Not So Bothered About Compulsory Redundancies? Here are Four Reasons Why you Should Care and Fight!
Leicester UCU

1. It's an opportunity to promote justice and support affected colleagues

Colleagues at risk of redundancy are not situated in 'under-performing' areas. (The language of 'under-performance' is problematic and in many meetings with managers UCU has been demonstrating it is not defensible.) Individuals who are at risk have strong track records, are making ongoing contributions to research (both publications and grant capture), teaching and 'leadership' or 'service'. Our work is well-integrated into the University's teaching and research portfolios and creates the backbone for the University. This is evidence that our senior managers' decisions are ill-conceived, short-sighted and are forcing the institution onto an ever more heinous and destructive path.

2. You could be next

This is only the beginning. The University Leadership Team plans numerous 'business cases' for redundancies. Many current cases will be refuted, but others will be drafted. It is potentially a never-ending 'game'. If we stand together we can fight it. If we fragment we can easily end up more isolated and more fearful.

3. You will have to pick up the extra work of colleagues who leave the University

There is no avoiding it – there is still a great deal of work to be done for the institution to 'function'. Even in the 'best case' that cheaper labour is bought in as replacement, a great deal of experience and expertise will be lost. Those of us who remain will have to provide it

4. Morale and our University's reputation will decline further

Senior managers' attacks on staff will have adverse consequences – both direct and indirect – for years to come. The University of Leicester will continue to plummet in the various rankings. Staff goodwill and collegiality will continue to degrade. Long-term effects to your employer, and you by extension, will be unavoidable. Many of the 'leaders' responsible will look to move 'onwards and upwards': the rest of us will be left to pick up their pieces. Only a concerted effort by University of Leicester colleagues can change this trajectory.

https://www.uculeicester.org.uk/ucu/not-so-bothered-about-acompulsory-redundancies/

Seven Lessons Learned From The Campaign Against Redundancies at London South Bank
Russell Caplan, branch secretary, LSBU UCU

On 2 May 2018 the Vice Chancellor of London South Bank University called officers of the joint unions (UCU, Unison and GMB) to a meeting informing them that the university needed to make savings of between £5-8 million in staffing costs across the university. We calculated that this would amount to large-scale redundancies of well over a hundred jobs and begun a campaign with the other unions against the job cuts.

1. To some extent we lost control of joint negotiations. This coupled with the reluctance by the other unions to take a more militant stance led to a situation where we were persuaded to talk with management to see if we could get any concessions. The carrot was to open the 'enhanced' voluntary severance scheme to the entire university where it was originally to be targeted at those areas that needed to be cut. This we were persuaded would reduce compulsory redundancies. We also requested that the severance package be improved. At the moment it is described as enhanced because it lifts the statutory cap. Management agreed to open it up with some caveats about being able to refuse it if they felt they could not operate certain posts without the respective post holder. They also refused to improve the severance that would have made it more attractive for people to take up.

2. Having lost local control of negotiations, we lost control of the timing so crucial when management deliberately implements redundancies at a time they know is least propitious to union action.

3. Realising that we were being outmanoeuvred we sought to insert some urgency in to the process by calling another branch meeting and passing another motion calling on branch officers to begin a consultative ballot should management not provide assurances that there will be no compulsory redundancies. We then conveyed this to our Regional Official and the other unions. Unison was at this point having its own branch meeting. The majority of officers were opposed to running such a ballot. Fortunately the members voted in favour.

4. At a joint union meeting of branch officers and Regional Officials we agreed that at the next meeting with management we would seek an assurance that there will be no compulsory redundancies failing which management will be informed that we will be moving to a consultative ballot.

5. While it is important to be seen to be reasonable and amenable to talk to management, talking on issues such as redundancies without some kind of leverage that the threat of a ballot, albeit only a consultative one, provides, is really a waste of time. Unless management knows that the unions have a credible threat that can do damage to the business of the university and its reputation, you are pissing in the wind.

6. Finally, we tried to speak to LSBU Student Union even though we anticipated the response. They think what is happening at LSBU is what is required to be competitive. The neo-liberal university is a force of nature to these student 'leaders'. I write this not to write students off. They can be an important constituency in the fight. But we need to find student support elsewhere among the politically conscious and interested students if the student union does management's bidding.

7. The biggest lesson to be learned is not to delay. The union needs to prepare as quickly as possible for action. Even if it does not take it. But to face management on the other side of the table with any sort of leverage, you have to have something to make them sit up and think.

Interview with Mark Abel, chair of Brighton UCU co-ordinating committee, on Fighting Redundancies at Brighton in 2017

How did you build up momentum before moving to an industrial action ballot?

As a committee, we always try to make sure we are keeping members informed of issues as they develop. But we were aware that we needed to make extra efforts to do this even before the dispute because of the direction that our new Vice Chancellor was taking the university in. We decided to respond to her end-of-year video to all staff with one of our own, challenging her assessment of management's achievements. While making that video, we realised that we were going into dispute, so the video became an important tool for explaining the issues to staff and mobilising opposition. It was viewed about 1000 times and seemed to have a much greater and more immediate impact than all the email circulars that we put out. In the first week of spring term we did highly visible leafletting of every university building to reach non-UCU staff and students with arguments explaining the issues and the effect of the VC's attacks on staff on the university as a whole.

Did you run a consultative ballot before the official industrial action ballot?

We don't really like the passive and individualised nature of e-ballots so we didn't do that. Instead we held union meetings on each campus to discuss the situation and to move a motion to go for an industrial action ballot. The meetings were the biggest that anyone could remember so they generated a real sense of collective solidarity in taking on the management. There was not a single vote against moving to a ballot in any of the meetings.

What did you do to ensure a good result in the ballot?

Our ballot opened just before the change in the law came into effect on March 1st so was not subject to the new 50% threshold. Nevertheless, we knew that it was crucial to get both a good turnout and a high vote for strike action. We felt that if we could get the majority of members to vote, the result would probably take care of itself. We appealed to members to join action committees on each campus to help get the vote out. Membership lists were divided up between these volunteers whose task was to speak to each member to confirm that they had received and then posted their ballot paper. Obviously, they were also prepared to explain the issues and argue for a Yes vote as well. Many members did not receive their ballot paper, mostly because their details were not up to date at head office, and we did a lot of work requesting replacement papers on members' behalf. Waiting for the ballot result was extremely nerve-racking because so much depended on it. We knew that management were hoping for a weak vote. But the result was a 77% vote for strike action (84% for ASOS) on a 57% turnout. So although we didn't legally need to, not only did we meet the 50% threshold, we also exceeded the new requirement imposed on 'important public service workers' for a 40% majority of those eligible to vote. From then on, our management were on the back foot. They sued for peace before we had chance to start our escalating strike action.

Fighting Redundancies at Manchester Met

Pura Ariza, Equalities Officer, Manchester Met UCU

Helen Mayall, UCU Joint Convenor, Manchester Met

At MMU, the UCU Branch had been campaigning to save the MMU Cheshire (Crewe) Campus for several months and so members were aware of the risks to staff should the campus close. Members at Crewe produced a document detailing the arguments for keeping the campus open and a well-publicised on-line petition, which gained 1690 signatures. Branch meetings passed motions in support of keeping Crewe open and, once the decision to close it had been taken, an EGM moved forward with a motion to defend jobs, taking up the slogan of 'No Compulsory redundancies – defend jobs- we are all MMU.' This was to emphasise that, even though members might be at risk 40 miles from the Manchester Campus, members stood together across the whole university. One of the first things we did was to lobby the next Board of Governors and Sally Hunt came up to the lobby, one of several visits she made to MMU during the campaign.

In this period, members in Manchester heard directly from members in Crewe, about their experiences of arguing their case with managers and how they were being treated during this process, and the slogan: we are all MMU captured a growing sense of solidarity. As a site convenor, it was apparent members in my building had noticed the increased branch activity and saw this as a serious campaign to defend jobs.

We did have a consultative e-ballot but we had to work hard to make it active. The clear recommendation for a 'yes' vote helped. Our Get The Vote Out strategy aimed to speak to every member during the ballot, in person if possible, or by phone, or email if necessary. Officers, convenors and reps did a huge amount of talking to members in person across the campuses. For example, in my building we had a team of two convenors, several departmental reps and ordinary members who came forward to help. We leafletted all staff rooms to check people had received their ballot and to remind people to vote.

It was a nervous time, as so much was a stake, but the result was 88.9% in favour of declaring a dispute and initiating a statutory industrial action ballot, with over 50% turnout. Our industrial action ballot was April-May 2017, so after the changes to the law were implemented. Again, the clear recommendation for a 'yes' vote was essential to give members confidence. Crewe members made a video about how they were being treated in the process of the reorganisation to close their campus. We leafleted buildings as members were going into work and at lunchtime along routes to coffee outlets. There was a new petition, this time against compulsory redundancies, now with 2214 signatures. The night before a rally with Sally Hunt, MMU cancelled our lecture theatre booking, so we relocated at the last minute and this just gave us more publicity.

Our postal ballot was over the Easter holidays and into the May marking period, so we did a lot of emailing and voice mail messages, asking members to let us know that they had voted. We followed up lots of lost ballots and one key tip is to check post rooms and pigeon holes as many ballot papers were hiding under piles of unopened post and unread inspection copies.

We too knew that management didn't think we would get a 50% turnout, yet they could see the consultative ballot result! The postal ballot result was 79% in favour of strike action and a 55% turnout. Since then, we had two successful strike days. The first of these was on a University Open Day, and talking to parents and young people about the cuts to education clearly struck a chord. It was just a week after the general election, and people were actually very keen to hear about the attacks on jobs and to support us. We held an 'open mike' session where branch members could talk directly about why and how we were defending education, and visitors stopped to listen and support. The day after our strikes management asked for talks to resolve the dispute.

Fighting Union-busting at Coventry
Stephen Cowden, chair, Coventry UCU

The marketisation of universities which began under New Labour but was marked fundamentally by the introduction of £9000 fees in 2012 has created new significant opportunities for a new type of 'educational entrepreneur'. The creation of Coventry University College (recently re-named CU Coventry) embodies this process. The College is described as a 'no frills' educational experience with courses that are 'designed for people who want to benefit from high quality courses on a concentrated basis and who have decided that the traditional student experience is not for them.'

Although CU Coventry's Degree programmes are all validated by Coventry University, the professional academic standards are different to Coventry University. Teachers at CU Coventry are classified as 'tutors' rather than 'lecturers', so they are paid considerably much less, with inferior terms and conditions. They can't join the teacher's Pension Scheme; having only a much inferior scheme in which the employer's contributions are only half as much as at the University. At Coventry University, staff teach 550 hours of formal contact time per year - at CU Coventry that figure is 800+ hours. Staff turnover is high and morale is low: according to a survey carried out by UCU this year 90% of staff said that they had considered leaving in the last 12 months, almost without exception because of the working conditions at CU Coventry. Indeed one staff member reported that 'Teaching and academic staff are permanently tired and stressed', while another, noting the impact on students said: 'The pressure on the students to perform is continuous, and they have little to no time to reflect on the information they are getting.'

As CU Coventry is a wholly owned subsidiary of Coventry University, you might think they would want to address these problems. Quite the contrary - CU Coventry is considered such a massive success and two more institutions have been created on the same model: CU Scarborough and CU London (based in Dagenham). In 2016/17 the company had a turnover of £17.3m from which it was able to gift-aid £3.8m to its owner, Coventry University. What we can see here is that behind these worthy concerns about a 'different kind of student', is a model of low waged de-professionalised education which is used to finance the growth of the University 'Group', furthering its competitive position.

The campaign for recognition:
For several years UCU has requested union representation but management refused. In 2017, staff at CU Coventry supported by the UCU branch at Coventry University, gained sufficient support to win 'statutory recognition' – a legal entitlement available when 50% of the staff group indicate they want a trade union to represent them. In March 2018 University management responded to this by secretly registering the College's Staff Consultative Group – a Company union run by management - as a trade union thereby denying UCU the right to negotiate for staff.

The UCU branch at Coventry University took up the campaign against this appalling act of union-busting, which stood out even in the context of the aggressive managerialism of today's University managers. Our campaign focussed on what was wrong with a publicly funded body deliberately degrading the working conditions of its staff. This resonated amongst staff at the university, amongst UCU branches up and down the country and amongst trade unionists in the city and throughout the West Midlands. The branch built an effective campaign mobilising around a petition, demonstrations, an Early Day Motion which was signed by 29 MPs and a social media campaign. In May 2018 the University management realised we weren't going away and they signed an agreement with UCU for recognition at the three subsidiaries.

What we can learn from this:
The rampant managerialism developing in Higher Education presents its predatory development as a fait accompli, something to which 'there is no alternative'. What we waged here was a defensive struggle, but one which at the same time showed that staff could have influence in challenging management's behaviour through their Union. The membership realised that the branch was capable of challenging management. Strong branches are not just built on a militant attitude – they need to be places where a new generation of activists can be nurtured, and this is essential if we are to maintain the present staff conditions for new staff as well as creating an alternative to the debasement of education which marketisation represents.

Counter-Accounting
David Harvie, Leicester UCU

University bosses (vice-chancellors, presidents, principals, etc.) usually deploy some sort of financial argument to justify their attack on university workers. The university is facing 'competitive student recruitment' and therefore income is down (Portsmouth). Cutting staff in some areas will allow the institution to invest elsewhere, enabling it to 'increase the pace of the improvements already taking place' (Liverpool). 'Other universities have reduced their staff costs in relation to income, [but] our costs have continued to rise' (Leicester).

But all UK universities are legally required to publish annual financial statements. These often provide lots of information that can be used to debunk the financial case for sacking people.

University accounts are usually available on-line and are very easy to find: simply search for the institution's name plus "financial statements". They tend to be published 12 months or so after the (financial) year which they report on – e.g. statements for 2016/17 won't be available until summer of 2018. Each university will typically have an archive going back at least a decade (e.g. Liverpool's and Leicester's go back to 2003/4 and Portsmouth's to 2005/6) so it's possible to get a good sense of what the trends are. Note, however, that each set of statements will only give that year's figure and the corresponding figure for the previous year. In other words, if you want to look at your institution's financial surplus, say, over the past 12 years, you will need to look in every year's edition.

Some very useful information can be obtained simply by reading through the financial statements – without any specialist knowledge of accountancy. We see, for instance, that University of Portsmouth's income actually rose by 3.8% between 2015/16 and 2016/17. Admittedly not as much as its expenditure increased (7.4%), but this institution still made a surplus of £6.8m or £11.9m

Income

The University's income for 2016/17 totals £233.7 million, compared to £225.2 million in 2015/16.

Sources of Income	2016/17 £000	2015/16 £000	Change £000	Change %
Student Tuition Fees: Home and EU full-time	132,174	122,149	10,025	8.2
Student Tuition Fees: International full-time	31,987	30,923	1,064	3.4
Student Tuition Fees: Other	19,335	18,302	1,033	5.6
Funding Council Grants	21,848	21,992	(144)	(0.7)
Funding for Research Projects	7,792	6,519	1,273	19.5
Income from Innovation Activities, Residences & Catering and Other Sources	19,996	24,618	(4,622)	(18.8)
Income from Investments	443	613	(170)	(27.7)
Donations and Endowments	107	117	(10)	(8.5)
Total	233,682	225,233	8,449	3.8

Expenditure

Expenditure by Type	2016/17 £000	2015/16 £000	Change £000	Change %
Staff Costs	136,951	124,487	12,464	10.0
Depreciation	21,870	14,705	6,965	47.4
Other Operating Expenses	64,642	68,152	(3,510)	(5.2)
Interest and Other Finance Costs	506	555	(49)	(8.8)
Finance Charge in Respect of Pension Schemes	3,190	3,380	(190)	(5.6)
Total	226,959	211,279	15,680	7.4

Surplus

The surplus for the year on the University's consolidated accounts is £6.8 million (2.9% of total income). This includes £5 accelerated depreciation for the Langstone Halls of Residence which are due to be permanently vacated at the end of M Excluding this adjustment, the 2016/17 surplus is £11.9 million compared to £14.0 million in 2015/16.

(depending on how you count) in 2016/17, on top of a £14.0m surplus the year before. Adding these two figures together suggests that this institution has a cushion of at least £20m, probably considerably more. Indeed, the director of finance concludes their part of the report with the words: 'Once again the University delivered a significant surplus as reported in its financial statements. This builds on several years of excellent financial performance.' In light of this, the VC's warning that his institution will lose £4.5m in 2018/19 and maybe more in 2019/20, suggests there might be alternatives to departments making savings of 5–7 per cent. (And that the UCU branch might consider exploring these alternatives rather than seeking to justify the VC's strategy.)*

And on the question of potential savings, activists at Portsmouth might use the knowledge that their boss Graham Galbraith benefited from emoluments totalling £305,000 in 2016/17, up from £303,000 a year earlier, whilst the number of 'other higher paid staff' – defined as those earning more than £100k each year – rose from seven to ten.

Staff at University of Liverpool probably know that VC Janet Beer received £363.3k in 2016/17 – including 'performance related pay' of £52.6k. But from the financial statements we also learn – just a few minutes work on a pocket calculator are needed – that £17m (6.5% of the institution's total staff costs) went to just 120 individuals (out of a total of 5,248 employees). The team that produced Liverpool's 2016/17 financial statements boast of that institution's surplus, noting in the 'financial highlights', that it rose from £20.6m to £44.1m, 'representing a return on turnover of 8.3%, compared to 4.7% last year. This is ahead of the plan target of 6%.' Again, with such a healthy sum in the bank, one wonders why anyone must lose their job.

Sometimes it's necessary to trawl through previous sets of financial statements. [A possibly arcane point, but accounting rules changed between 2014/15 and 2015/16, resulting in significant

*https://bit.ly/2NZifrb

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS | 45

	Year Ended 31 July 2017		Year Ended 31 July 2016	
	Consolidated £m	University £m	Consolidated £m	University £m
8 Staff costs				
Staff costs:				
Salaries	212.2	211.1	199.6	198.7
Social security costs	20.7	20.6	17.1	17.0
Movement on USS provision	(3.5)	(3.5)	3.6	3.6
Other pension costs	33.7	33.5	30.3	30.2
Total	263.1	261.7	250.6	249.5

	Year Ended 31 July 2017 £'000	Year Ended 31 July 2016 £'000
Emoluments of the Vice-Chancellor:		
Salary	266.9	256.3
Performance related pay	52.6	44.2
Benefits	4.3	4.4
Allowance in lieu of pension contribution	39.5	36.7
	363.3	341.6

Remuneration of other higher paid staff, excluding employer's pension contributions (subject to relevant accounts direction and shown before any salary sacrifice):

	No.	No.
£100,000-£109,999	25	21
£110,000-£119,999	25	19
£120,000-£129,999	13	21
£130,000-£139,999	7	10
£140,000-£149,999	10	9
£150,000-£159,999	6	8
£160,000-£169,999	11	8
£170,000-£179,999	7	7
£180,000-£189,999	4	4
£190,000-£199,999	3	1
£200,000-£209,999	2	-
£210,000-£219,999	2	3
£220,000-£229,999	2	4
£230,000-£239,999	1	1
£260,000-£269,999	1	-
£290,000-£299,999	-	-
£340,000-£349,999	-	1
	119	117

Overall turnover

£523.2m

Overall turnover increased by £28.0m (5.7%) to £523.2m. This is slightly ahead of the rate of increase of the previous year, at 5.5%.

Operating surplus

£44.1m

The operating surplus rose by £20.6m (87.7%) to £44.1m, representing a return on turnover of 8.3% compared to 4.7% last year. This is ahead of the plan target of 6%.

Tuition fees income

£256.5m

Tuition fees income increased by £15.8m (6.6%) to £256.5m and research income increased by £0.8m to £94.5m, an increase of 0.9%.

Staff investment

£263.1m

There has been an increasing investment in staff. Staff costs increased by £12.5m (5%) to £263.1m. Overall staff numbers increased by 268 (5.4%) to 5,248, with an increase of 195 (6.6%) in academic staff.

Balance sheet

£657.3m

The balance sheet shows growth in net worth of £76.4m (13.2%) to £657.3m

Buildings expenditure

£75.1m

Overall outlay on buildings expenditure was £75.1m with £29.6m related to the Greenbank student accommodation village development, £32.5m on academic estate, including completion of the Materials Innovation Factory and Sensor City, and £13m on equipment and IT.

differences in the way universities' financial performance is measured. In particular, reported surpluses fell, despite there being no underlying material change. Search 'Understanding changes to universities' financial reporting' for a January 2017 article that explains these reporting changes.]

At Leicester, for instance, VC Paul Boyle recently claimed: 'Whilst other universities have reduced their staff costs in relation to income, our costs have continued to rise'. Not quite a lie – costs have risen, but so has income – but grossly misleading because staff costs as a proportion of income have fallen for the past two years at that institution. See chart 'staff costs to income ratio'; source: http://www.uculeicester.org.uk/ucu/disquiet-in-the-ranks/

Staff costs as a proportion of income, 2002/03–2016/17
Source: University of Leicester Financial Statements, various years
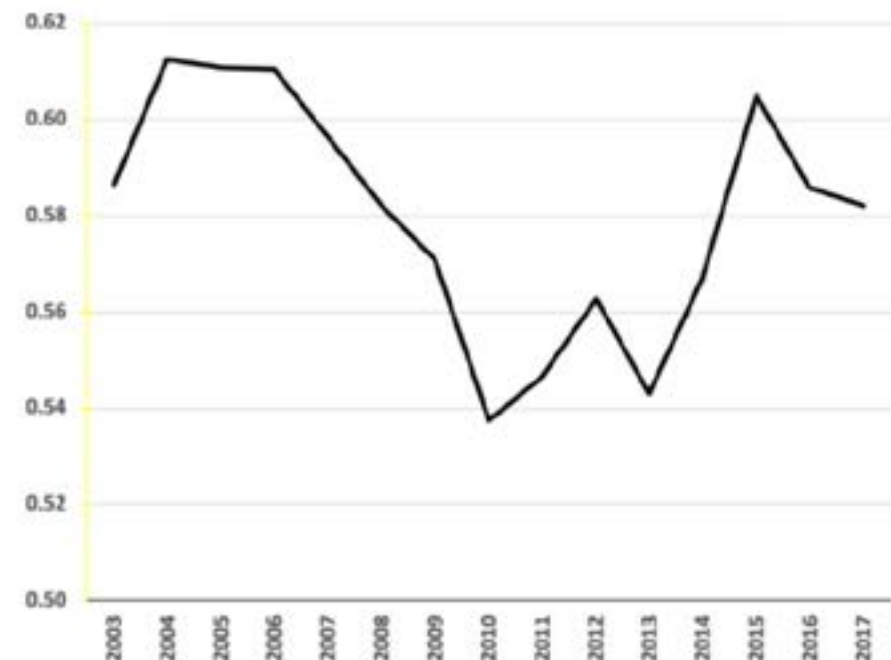
Sometimes a little more accounting knowledge is required to make sense of what's happening financially. (It shouldn't be too hard to find colleagues who have this knowledge. All business and management schools, or even economics departments, will have a division or department of accounting. Many actuarial scientists – sometimes part of mathematics and/or statistics departments – will be fluent in the language of company accounts. The not-for-profit group Corporate Watch – https://corporatewatch.org/ – can also offer workshops, for a relatively small fee, on reading accounts and otherwise investigating your institution's finances.) A close, informed reading of an institution's accounts can remarkably revealing. Again at University of Leicester – this time two years ago – activists used published information available in publicly-available financial statements in order to undermine senior managers' case for 150+ compulsory redundancies.

In this instance, the 'university leadership team' was talking of a 'financial crisis' on the basis of a predicted deficit of £12.2m. The counter-accountants discovered, however, that: (i) this £12.2m figure included a 'contingency' component of £5.1m – a wholly irregular (and arguably creative) use of the very specific accounting term 'contingent liabilities'; (ii) that 'additional costs of staff restructuring' contributed another £6.5m to this predicted deficit – in other words, the costs associated with making workers redundant would contribute to the deficit that was being used to justify those sackings!; (iii) that over the preceding ten years the University of Leicester had made surpluses totalling £80m, plenty to absorb any short-term deficit. In other words, the 'crisis' had been manufactured.

This debunking (the 5-page report is here: http://www.uculeicester.org.uk/ucu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/LUCU-full-alternative-financial-analysis-Sept-2016.pdf) helped defeat these redundancy plans.

Checklist:
1. If your university has been threatened with redundancies, have you done a financial review to analyse whether these cuts are necessary and if savings can be made elsewhere?

2. If voluntary severances have been announced, has your branch negotiated improvements in the packages on offer?

3. If your university has been threatened with redundancies, has the branch mobilised cross campus support early and discussed what leverage it can use, including a ballot on local strike action?

4. Does your branch actively challenge performance management and metrics that can be used to single certain members out for redundancy?

5. Has your branch worked with the Student Union or other student groups to mobilise solidarity and joint campaigning?

6. Has your branch met with the College Council and presented counter business cases and arguments against redundancies?

7. Has your branch mobilised a media campaign, using local radio, newspapers and social media to publicise threatened redundancies?

8. Has your branch considered other interventions, such as leafletting at open days, banner drops, contacting alumni, lobbying council?

VIII: Ending Out-sourcing

Some of the most inspirational struggles that we have seen in HE in recent years have featured campaigns to bring services back in-house and to seek justice for some of lowest-paid and most precarious workers. Cleaners have led the way in this but other services – including accommodation, English language teaching, recruitment and catering – are often provided by for-profit companies that have no commitment to public education. We should learn from the most successful campaigns to bring back services in-house.

CAUTION
WORKERS' STRUGGLE

TAKE CARE!
OF YOUR WORKERS

CAUTION
IN-HOUSING
IN PROGRESS

CAUTION

How SOAS Workers Defeated Outsourcing
Achille Marotta and Noam Chen-Zion

From the 29th of August 2018, roughly 120 support staff at SOAS clocked in as direct employees of the university, ending a 12-year struggle of the Justice for Workers campaign (J4W). The campaign was founded in 2006 as Justice for Cleaners (J4C) after outsourced cleaners approached the SOAS UNISON branch over unpaid wages. J4C was led by the outsourced workers themselves while maintaining its own structure separate from the union branch. This meant that wider tactics could be pursued without the branch facing blame from management or control from the regional or national structure of the union. What further distinguished it from similar campaigns was its open membership to students and in-house staff, giving them a degree of responsibility and power in the campaign.

Community support for J4C and strong action by the UNISON branch led to quick successes, with the company instituting the London Living Wage and recognising UNISON as the cleaners' union. However, the bosses' counteroffensive was brutal. In conjunction with SOAS, the company tricked the cleaners into a workplace raid on the 12th June 2009 and deported nine cleaners. It took years to regain momentum, until 2014 when a cleaners' strike won parity to in-house staff in sick pay and holiday pay. Furthermore, the School was forced to allow an independent investigation revealing that direct employment of outsourced workers was cost-neutral. The primary reason for outsourcing was no longer technical or economic, rather it had become a political tool for maintaining a fragmented workforce in the university.

SOAS responded to the independent investigation with new outsourcing contracts for all support staff except catering, who were left on significantly lower conditions. Under these new circumstances, J4C reorganised itself as J4W, to represent all support staff. On the 12th June 2017, during the commemoration of the deportations, SOAS management announced the closure of the refectory, which would have made redundant the catering staff who had joined the campaign. The campaign responded swiftly by occupying management's office. Faced with a 12-day occupation, walkouts by refectory staff, support staff protests reaching late into the night, and prospects of a re-energised campaign comprising the entirety of support staff, SOAS management gave in. Not only was the refectory kept open, but all outsourced services were brought in-house.

The campaign's inclusion of students and in-house staff, its autonomy from UNISON regional, and its extension to all support staff, was perfectly demonstrated during those 12 days of occupation. The students and workers organised themselves not simply out of solidarity with catering staff, but also for the sake of reduced prices and healthier food. By fighting neoliberal marketisation of the university, the campaign overcame the separate interests of different sections of the workforce. J4W won by undercutting the fragmentation of workers upon which outsourcing is based.

Goldsmiths Justice for Cleaners
Robert Mozzachiodo, Goldsmiths UCU

Justice for Cleaners Goldsmiths started organising on the 28th of June 2018 when, following a UCU Gold Paper meeting, around 25 self-organised cleaners at Goldsmiths confronted university Council members before a Council meeting. They demanded that management halt the shift pattern restructure that had been threatened by their outsourcing company ISS. Many of us – both staff and students – stood with the cleaners as they confidently explained to senior management how the restructure would impact their lives and how their rights as workers were being abused. Inspired by the actions of the cleaners, and successful Justice for Cleaners campaigns in other institutions, we arranged to meet the following week to decide how best to follow up managements' tepid responses to cleaners, and make sure their voices were heard.

A group of around 20 staff and students with varying degrees of commitment met throughout the summer to build a campaign in support of the cleaners. Among our organizing activities we circulated an open letter in support of the cleaners' campaign to Goldsmiths staff which gained 400 signatories, we arranged breakfast and supper clubs to meet and establish bonds with cleaning staff, we produced 'know your rights' information booklets to raise consciousness among cleaners and we arranged a number of demonstrations on campus, the most high profile of which was at the opening of Goldsmiths Centre of Contemporary Art gallery on the 7th September.

Throughout our campaign, all of our efforts and organising activities have been guided by the principle of prioritising the interests and voices of cleaning staff. In that respect, the work that has contributed toward making spaces where cleaning staff can come together to speak and reflect on their collective strength has been the most vital of the campaign.

Thanks to the pressure generated internally and externally by the campaign, management have now confirmed that the terms and conditions of any future cleaning contract 'will ensure all cleaners are given parity of conditions with other Goldsmiths staff – sets a very high bar for external providers, and it is quite possible than in insourced provision proves the most viable option.'

In September 2018, some three months after our first meeting, Goldsmiths' Council agreed unanimously to bring the cleaners back in-house – a huge victory for the campaign and a signal to extend the campaign to other outsourced workers in the university.

Checklist:

1. Has your branch done an audit of out-sourced companies used by your university, and the nature and length of the contracts currently in place? ☐

2. Does your branch work with other trade unions on campus who represent workers in these areas? ☐

3. Can your branch organise a skill-sharing session with campaigns from other universities and with similar groups in other sectors? ☐

4. Has your branch worked with campaign groups, the student's union and other unions to build hardship funds for outsourced workers on strike? ☐

5. Has your branch helped to mobilise the local community, local trade unions and organisations to support insourcing campaigns? ☐

6. Can your branch support with financial analysis that shows the cost effectiveness of insourcing? ☐

7. Has your branch organised a lobby of Council with outsourced workers and their unions to publicise issues with outsourcing and inform them of the benefits of bringing all university workers back in house? ☐

IX: Stronger with Studetns

Common Room: Cardiff University
Steven Stanley and Grace Krause, Cardiff UCU

Common Room is a series of informal events where we reclaim university spaces for meaningful conversations about issues that matter when it comes to our university working and studying lives. Students and staff come together to explore the big questions about how universities are, or should/could be, run.

The initiative came out of the wide ranging discussions held during the 2018 university staff pension strike where it became clear that we urgently need to create collective spaces for reflecting on the status of UK higher education. We also need to revalue our working and studying lives and create a culture of care and respect during increasingly toxic and competitive times. Common Room seeks to sustain staff and student solidarity following the strike along with creating community across campus. We started with a series of café meetings to collectively discuss ways forward and created a schedule of weekly events.

So far, we have been on a tour of the common room spaces of our academic schools and have alternated indoor meetings with outdoor meetings in parks and cafes. The meetings are informal and provide opportunities for mutual sharing of news and updating each other on ongoing campaigns. We have been especially focussed on student-led initiatives such as attempts to democratise our Student's Union along with the creation of a "We Are The University" student society which aims to build solidarity between students, staff and trades unions.

We have been discussing how to practically resist marketised forms of higher education and reimaging alternatives, such as through the creation of a University Charter. Through such initiatives we hope to turn the hashtag activism of #WeAreTheUniversity into practical strategies for change and transformation at a grass roots level.

We have been reflecting on competing values in higher education, resisting and imagining alternatives to metric and audit cultures including ranking and grading, democratising university committees and boards, as well as discussing our experiences of precarity, workload and well-being.

We have engaged in outdoor park experiments using DIY 'social mindfulness' zines to reclaim our mental health in times of neoliberalism, creating a safe space to 'be and breathe' and expose the 'hidden injuries' of academic capitalism whilst developing collective sources of support and collegiality.

By informally socialising and eating together with those in and beyond our own institution, we have been developing relationships of trust and belonging during times when we increasingly feel like isolated individuals. Those who have attended common room sessions have found them to be interesting, engaging, and welcoming spaces for open discussion, sharing ideas, and imagining university futures from the ground up.

"COMMON ROOM"

Weekly on Wednesdays 11am-12noon

23 May – Adventures in Social Mindfulness*
30 May – The University Charter & We Are The University – **LAWPOL** – Law Building (2.30)
6 June – Adventures in Social Mindfulness*
13 June – Competing Values – **GEOPL** – Glamorgan Building GEOPL Common Room (2.73)
20 June – Adventures in Social Mindfulness*
27 June – Precarity, Mental Health and Supporting Casualised Workers and Postgrads? – Developing a Humane Approach to Higher Education – **PSYCH** – Tower Building Common Room (5th floor, too 5.12/5.13)
4 July – Adventures in Social Mindfulness*
11 July – Critical Pedagogy – **JOMEC** – Bute Building Common Room (access through Main Office, ground floor, left at entrance)
18 July – Adventures in Social Mindfulness*
25 July – The Social Mindfulness Toolbox – **SOCSI** – Glamorgan Building Common Room (0.19)

* 'Adventures in Social Mindfulness' involves guided public meditation, contemplative experiments & field trips – **meet at the War Memorial in Alexandra Gardens** opposite Glamorgan Building

Student Solidarity at University of Ulster
Aisling O'Beirn, University of Ulster, Belfast

Student Solidarity was vital to giving our picket momentum. As the strike wore on, more and more students pro-actively joined us, first individually to discuss the issues at stake until their grew number grew. Outside, on the institution's threshold, we saw again the vital and rich diversity that our students bring to the university. They brought a range of cultural, social and political experiences and made our picket a pluralistic, productive and discursive zone.

With Marta as a driving force and picket stalwart they self-organised, producing, hot water bottles, coffee, brownies, flyers, banners, musicians, dogs, camaraderie, questions, discussion and a Wishful Thinking box to poll for and envision social and political spaces that they might also fight for. They identified potential to reimagine their student's union and demand real social change.n

Their 7 meters of resistance took the form of a banner that ran the length of the entrance railings saying We Support Our Striking Lecturers. They kept us going. They played an active role in Alternative Arts School. They made placards and posters, which they kept and press into service for other demos in the city. They see the big picture, the insidious rise of the right, the hostile environment, threats of increasing corporatisation and marketisation to their education and their futures. They were, in their own words, 'Angry Students Not Happy Costumers'. Through their solidarity and political astuteness they made us feel that we're doing something right.

They taught me so much. They took care of us. Every day. During that long protracted cold spell. They said 'keep the hot water bottles, just in case'!'

Student Solidarity
Leicester UCU member

To some extent, the tremendous practical solidarity between our branch and the students at our university during the USS strike was a thing not of our making but resulting from a serendipitous misstep by our VC. The insertion of his friend David Willetts, the ex Tory MP who had masterminded the tripling of student fees, and voted regressively on a range of issues related to reproductive autonomy, gender equality, and sexuality into the vacant Chancellor position was, as it turns out, an indignity too far for staff and students alike.

Our branch cemented our bond with the students over this early on by working closely with several more activist-oriented student societies (Femsoc in particular) to organise a demo in the week before the USS strike kicked off. This included an unruly presence in an on-campus inaugural address by our employer's unwelcome incoming figurehead. From there forward, both UCU and student activists worked hard to keep the governance issues brought to the fore by Willetts' appointment and the attack on our pensions in continual dialogue with one another, bringing out the common theme of toxic neoliberalism.

When the USS strike began the following week, we'd already created a shared atmosphere of carnival and camaraderie that continually developed as the strike progressed, perhaps reaching its climax with a student production of a pantomime outside the main administrative building. We also co-produced stickers and leaflets. Of course, when our student friends went into occupation in the 'corridor of power' (the softly carpeted space between the Leadership Team's offices) practical support from UCU members in the form of food, blankets, visits, and social media outreach - not to mention a raucous and sustained celebration when they emerged as heroes three days later - was assured.

We've continued to nurture our links with the students ever since both formally, through our UCU branch student liaison officer, and informally through solid friendships born of shared struggle.

Checklist:

1. Does your branch have a designated student liaison officer or team?

2. Does the branch meet with the Student Union to discuss common goals and priorities each year and how the unions can support each other?

3. Do Student Union sabbatical officers and UCU members who sit on committees, academic board or senate speak before meetings to discuss how to handle urgent issues that may be on the agenda?

4. When strike action is proposed do members speak directly with students about the issues at stake in large lectures and special meetings, and are members available to talk with individual students or groups about questions and concerns students may have?

5. Does your university hold staff-student assemblies where common issues, campaigns and desires can be discussed and work towards?

6. Does your university have spaces where staff and students can meet informally to discuss issues in common?

7. Do members in your branch actively support students campaigns, occupations and interventions?

X: Afterword

Standing for Positions
Sean Wallis, President UCL UCU and NEC

A grassroots union is built on independent rank and file activity. But periodically, activists find themselves considering whether to apply for positions in the local branch, region or national structures of the union.

Who leads our union does matter. UCU has two main groups at the top of the union.

The left's strategy is, in broad terms, to push for the maximum demands and activity that members may be convinced to support (a concept usually only tested in practice). That means, for instance, being prepared to go out on a limb and argue the case for voting Yes in ballots that you might lose.

For example, during the winter of 2017-18, left activists in pre-92 HE went out and carried the argument for the USS industrial action ballot, which encouraged rank and file reps to call for the maximum action. Without a substantial Left minority of the UCU national leadership it is unlikely that the ballot would have even taken place, never mind that it was successful. That also meant working with the General Secretary who also argued at the time for a high vote and hard-hitting action.

Once the action had begun, power shifted from the UCU national leadership towards the rank and file. This is not something that the left should be scared of - on the contrary, it is our main weapon. But it terrifies the trade union right, and explains why the UCU leadership, including the General Secretary, then performed a volte face.

The right in the leadership are focused almost exclusively around negotiating with the employers. This implies at best not raising 'excessive demands', appearing reasonable and responsible, and presenting the union as a route for 'doing a deal'. Their stance is to seek moderation in demands and to remain on good terms with the employers and their representatives.

Due to the size of the union, successful campaigning means working together with other activists, participating in groups of like-minded activists for a common goal ('factions'). UCU Left is the long-standing 'left' faction in our union. The Independent Broad Left is the 'right' faction. Joining a left group does not mean agreeing with everything everyone says (!), but it does mean agreeing to work towards a common goal.

It also means a commitment to member democracy and debate. You are not standing to substitute for members - you are standing to represent members and give them opportunities to fight back.

Such opportunities require democratic accountability at every level. If you are thinking about standing for a local, regional or national position, you should think about what the commitment is you can give in terms of time. But most of all you should think about what you can do to facilitate other members in building a grassroots fighting trade union for the struggles ahead.

Picketing for Beginners
Pura Ariza, Manchester Met UCU

1. Basics: locations and timings

- Decide in advance where you are going to picket – don´t forget side entrances, car park barriers etc. Cover as many entrances as you can but prioritise high visibility entrances in public places. We want to be seen!
- Draw up a rota in advance – make sure you have mobile numbers
- Start early. When picketing with other unions, ensure you all start early enough to cover the earliest shift. Scabs always try to sneak in early.
- Keep shifts down to 2 hours and if possible make sure there is an experienced branch activist on each shift. Ensure a minimum of 3 pickets on at all times. Don´t leave anyone alone on picket line.
- Do prioritise picket lines that can be seen from the road by the public – we want Manchester to know we´re taking action!
- Make sure everyone gets breaks and rests.
- Make sure you take everything you need from your office / workstation on the night before – we will not be entering the buildings at allon the strike day.
- Liaise with UNISON/ UNITE / GMB and agree in advance what their support will be. They may choose to come and support picket lines before work and during their breaks. They may even bring tea!

Come prepared, it´s a long day.
Dress warmly – you´re going to spend a lot of time outdoors. Identify somewhere local (eg SU, café) for tea and toilet – not university buildings. Talk to students, café workers about why we are on strike and about the collective benefits. Talk about what their work issues are. The attacks on the public sector affect everyone.

2. The picket line

- Make sure you have a sign which says "Official Picket Line". Display it proudly so that it can be seen
- Wear an armband if you have one.
- Make sure you have leaflets to give out to passers by
- Make sure you have a petition for them to sign, and collection buckets if appropriate
- Talk to them about why we´re on strike and how a strong strike will collectively benefit all workers
- Picketing can be fun and lively with singing, chanting, music etc.

3. The picket's pack of essentials (remember: you won't be entering university buildings on the day of the strike, so you will need to collect your materials & packs the night before)

- Placards (mounted on sticks in advance), stickers, picket armbands, petitions, collection buckets.
- Leaflets – use a local leaflet as well as national leaflets if you can.
- Petitions – for UNISON/ GMB members and students to sign to demonstrate their solidarity with our action
- Thick tape (gaffer tape), scissors, plastic tags (for attaching placards to posts), pens, thick markers
- The branch banner
- A megaphone if you have one.
- Drinks, snacks, flasks.

4. Why we are there.

- We use the picket line to persuade doubters not to go into work – going on strike is about taking action together. Our aim is to close the University.
- Students should be reminded that our strike is also about defending education. We should ask them not to cross the

picket line.

- If the SU has issued a statement, make sure you have copies to give out to students.
- Make sure you talk to everyone you see.
- Make sure you approach every UCU member. Talk to them about the issues, the reason for the action, the need to stand together, the other unions taking action, etc. A strong showing will send a very clear message to your management on all the local issues of workload, bullying, managerialist abuses etc.

5. On picketing rights.

- Picketing is a legal activity
- Don't be intimidated by management – don´t be put off my management claiming that what you're doing is illegal – always consult with a branch officer
- This is a legal strike (even according to the anti-trade union laws)
- It is our right to try (peacefully) to persuade workers from other employers not to cross the picket line – (eg deliveries – see DirectGov.com) - it is lawful to do this when you are picketing
- Code of Practice on Picketing: http://www.bis.gov.uk/files/file23914.pdf

UCU striker 2018
University and College Union

Rucksack containing: waterproof jacket and warm clothing. Be prepared for inclement weather. During the 14 strike days of February and March 2018, picketers withstood weather that ranged from warm sunshine, through lashing rain, to sleet, snow and subzero temperatures.

Propaganda - Make the political case – and persuade more supporters and sympathisers – with fliers. Shown here is an example of standard UCU issue. Many branches also produced their own leaflets, tailored to their own audience.

Cowbell - We need more cowbell!

Vacuum flask - In Leicester one comrade toured the picket lines daily by customised bicycle, bringing tea and coffee; one particular line was served by a sympathetic professional services colleague (a member of another union and therefore not on strike) who took hot drink-orders from pickets several times a day. But don't take such support for granted: carry your own flask of your preferred beverage.

Water - Stay hydrated

Hip flask - On picket lines in Sheffield, comrades kept their spirits up with spirits!

Militant attitude - Determination and a willingness to be confrontational are essential attributes of any successful struggle

Smart phone - The February/March 2018 strikes were characterised by the horizontal nature of much organising. Local branches and individual activists communicated directly with each other – using email groups and social media platforms such as Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook – allowing them to circumvent UCU's formal hierarchies. This 'horizontalism' was instrumental in successfully channelling rank-and-file opposition to the 'deal' of March 2.

Drum - At Leicester a drum and its drummer arrived for picket duty on Day 1. The picket ensemble grew steadily thereafter in skill and in size. By Day 14 it included a dozen percussion instruments, one saxophone, one euphonium, one (purple) trombone, two guitars, several vuvuzelas and a legion of whistles. The sound of drums is the sound of winning.

Stout footwear - Essential for standing around, impromptu tours of the campus and taking to the streets.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The UCU website is an incredibly useful starting point for information and resources about various aspects of our campaigning work. In particular, you can find the

- UCU activist education programme at https://www.ucu.org.uk/training
- List of UCU campaigns and resources at https://www.ucu.org.uk/campaigns and https://www.ucu.org.uk/campaigning
- List of contractually-related issues at https://www.ucu.org.uk/atwork
- Activist and rep page (where you can find details of Congress, the union's structure, elections and so on) at https://www.ucu.org.uk/getactive
- 2008 UCU Activists' Handbook at https://uculondonregion.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/ucu-activist-handbook2.pdf

But you need also to look beyond the official structures of the union for examples of grassroots activism via organisations like:

- UCU Left, http://uculeft.org
- Branch Solidarity Network, https://ucubranchsolidaritynetwork.wordpress.com
- Rank and File Revolt, https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/ucu-rank-and-file
- Campaign for the Public University, https://publicuniversity.org.uk
- Council for the Defence of British Universities, http://cdbu.org.uk
- USS Briefs, https://ussbriefs.com
- Warwick Anti-Casualisation at https://warwickanticasualisation.wordpress.com

And of course look beyond the university to support other initiatives and to learn from other campaigns. There are useful resources also at:

- Global Justice Now: https://www.globaljustice.org.uk//activist-resources
- The TUC: https://www.tuc.org.uk/union-reps
- Unite: https://www.learnwithunite.org/home/courses/support/activist-support/resources/

For more information and if you want to organise
an event at your institution that focuses on
issues raised in this handbook, please email:
branchsolidaritynetwork@gmail.com

@ucusolidarity

https://ucubranchsolidaritynetwork.wordpress.com

BRANCH SOLIDARITY NETWORK
theuniversityisours