

Leeds University UCU is fighting hard to represent and defend its members and we hope this newsletter will give you some idea of the issues with which we are engaged. Red Circling, equalities and our national battle for decent pay for our members all feature. In particular, we have seen a great growth in our membership and its involvement in our activities; we hope the pictures below show some of the new energy which has invigorated **your** union.

News from the red circle.... we're making progress but don't drop your guard....

Lesley McGorrigan, UCU Joint Secretary

Before the dust had even begun to settle from this year's acrimonious pay dispute, our management wrote to around 100 academic related staff (admin, library, computing etc) on 1 June to report that the role analysis exercise had downgraded (red-circled) them. In the name of equal pay for work of equal value these, mostly women, members of staff were to face pay cuts averaging £8,000 and, in one case, nearly £20,000 - a pay protection package and personal development scheme were thrown in to sweeten the bitter pill. UCU called a dispute immediately but management unilaterally implemented their plan, boasting its rigour and fairness.



Red circle protest outside library

The red-circled staff formed a group, organised a national petition, rallies, articles and letters to the national press (see *THES*, 18/08/06: *Could you afford to lose £8,000 a year?*) and Leeds UCU voted to escalate to industrial action. This resulted in ACAS-hosted talks between UCU and management.

We've won a revised implementation date of 1 December 2006, commitment to undertake further work on the scheme and careful re-examination of all the cases previously highlighted as downgraded. This is a huge climb down by management and an important local victory in the early days of UCU at Leeds but staff still feel extremely bitter and angry and are keeping a close eye on the next stages of the battle.

Keep in touch with the Red Circle group; contact Sue Redhead (See contact details below).

Women and equality

Ann Blair, UCU Vice President

When the AUT women's group reformed early in 2005 one of the first questions we asked was – "Well, we think there is inequality at Leeds: is it true?" Using data provided by the University and collected for the Higher Education Statistics Authority, Anna Clough and I produced a presentation that showed a snapshot of women's position in the faculties and services. This demonstrated – pretty universally – that whatever the concentration of women in the lower academic and academic related grades, women were not making it through to higher grades in the same proportions as men. And in most cases the disparity was stark.

This presentation formed the centrepiece of an AUT equality event in September 2005 and was then given to members of JCUA (the main negotiating committee). To their credit the University side of this committee immediately accepted the stark reality that, once the data was looked at in this way, something must be done, and done urgently. In the early part of 2006 the University and the AUT worked jointly to facilitate a series of consultation meetings, five for women and one for Black and Minority Ethnic staff, where staff could share their experiences of the promotions system and, in the women's meetings, their views on what factors hold women back. The telling of women's experiences was a real eye-opener and demonstrated without doubt that there is work to be done on many levels. A draft report was produced, but the process of finalising this, publishing it, and starting to implement the recommendations has been far

from simple. Joint working suffered as a consequence of the national pay dispute, and then again as a result of the local job evaluation dispute. The draft report is just being finalised and a joint action plan is about to be developed. However, the results of the consultation are already starting to be felt in areas such as SRDS and in the negotiations on a new promotions system. The report will call for a massive change in the culture of the University and, of course, this will not be achieved overnight, but the need for fairness and the need for all staff to be supported to work to the highest levels is recognised. The changes it promises will benefit many under promoted men as well as women and this is fine. We are organising to address women's issues, not to bash our male colleagues.

The proof of the pudding etc.... but if this was the result of the women's group's first question then our potential is massive. We are currently looking at the gendered impact of job evaluation and at the RAE. Will the results be as dramatic? We shall see.

The women's group meets regularly during term time. All women members of the UCU have an open invitation and receive regular updates. If you would like to be more involved contact Ann Blair e.a.blair@leeds.ac.uk



Marching to the Vice-Chancellor's office, May 16th 2006

Palestine Trip

The UCU nationally wants to encourage academic links with Palestine in order to break down barriers. Leeds UCU is organising a visit to Hebron, with which Leeds City is twinned, together with Leeds University Students. We are looking for UCU members who would like to institute formal academic links, normally involving academic visits to both twinned institutions and possible student exchange. These visits will need to be funded through academic channels. The first visit will aim to establish contacts which can be developed into

long term academic collaboration. If you are interested in being involved, please contact the UCU press officer, Malcolm Povey. Advice and support will be gratefully received also. (m.j.w.povey@food.leeds.ac.uk)



UCU President, Gavin Reid, addressing an impromptu UCU meeting outside the Vice-Chancellor's office

Issues around the University

❖ *Individual cases*

Regardless of the University claims about staff 'well being', the real state of the relationship between the university and its staff can be fairly objectively measured in terms of the number of 'personal' cases the UCU negotiates with management at any one time. This is currently at its highest level in the history of the UCU (and its predecessor the AUT). As a result we are looking for volunteers to help the committee with personal cases. This involves some formal training and a small time commitment. In return you will have the satisfaction of helping your colleagues and your union, and generally making Leeds University a nicer place to work. You might also consider becoming a departmental representative, particularly if there is no one in your area, or even joining the committee!

❖ *Mediation*

Leeds UCU is working with the university on a new workplace mediation service. We hope that this will help prevent some situations developing into union personal cases. The university is looking for volunteer mediators, if you are interested contact Chris Pickering via the UCU Office (Details below).

❖ *Age equality regulations*

The Age Regulations outlaw direct as well as indirect discrimination. However, in both cases discrimination will not be unlawful if it can be objectively justified. Employers could be responsible for the acts of employees who discriminate on the grounds of age. If, for

example, harassment takes place in the workplace or a time and place associated with the workplace, an employer may be liable along with the individual(s) directly responsible. Upper age limits on unfair dismissal and redundancy will be removed. There will be a national default retirement age of 65, making compulsory retirement below 65 unlawful unless it can be objectively justified. Employees will have the right to request to work beyond 65 or any other retirement age set by the organisation or company they work for. The employer has a duty to consider such requests, although the employer does not actually have to give a reason for refusing any request. There are circumstances when discrimination may be lawful e.g. genuine occupational requirements, objective justifications, exceptions and exemptions. http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/9/t/ageregs_guidance_1.pdf

❖ **Fixed term staff**

We are campaigning for all fixed term, hourly paid and casually employed staff contracts to be converted to standard contracts or their fractional equivalents. In some universities hourly paid contracts have already been eliminated. We have had some successes in converting Fixed Term to standard contracts. This is very much down to you, our members; contact us on advice on how to approach the university to convert your contract.

❖ **Disability equality**

The 2005 Disability Discrimination Act proposes several changes to existing disability equality law. These come into effect on 5 December 2006. All public sector bodies (including colleges and universities) will now be subject to a general duty to promote equality between disabled and non-disabled people. This is similar to the duty to promote race equality under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. This is a positive duty which builds in disability equality at the beginning of the process rather than makes adjustments at the end after disabled people have complained about discrimination. Universities and colleges will also be subject to a number of specific duties. See http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/0/t/ded_guidance_1.pdf for more information.

... Of course, we also campaign for, and look forward to, gender equality.

Organising for Fighting Unions Conference

Leeds UCU is sending delegates to this conference to save public services, jobs and trade union rights. If you would like to attend please contact us. It is in Shoreditch Town Hall, London on November 11th. It is supported by a number of national trade union bodies such as the RMT as well as many UCU branches and was initiated by the Respect Coalition. Speakers include Labour MP John McDonnell, Matt Wrack of the FBU, and Roger Kline of the UCU, Mark Serwotka of the PCS and Alan Kenny of the NUT.

Ask your colleagues to join the UCU

Overleaf we have included a poster and a tear off slip which you can use to invite your colleagues to join the UCU. If you need more copies of this newsletter then contact the UCU office. The more members we have, the more effectively we can represent YOU. So don't be shy, ask. Your departmental rep has a list of members in your department. If you do not have a departmental rep, then become one today; just contact the UCU office. Ensure that there is a UCU notice board in your area. If there is not one then ask your head of department to provide one, we are entitled to have notice boards in all areas of the university.

Contact Points

Leeds University UCU can be contacted: on phone extension 35904 (external: 0113 343 5904), (answer phone when unattended), by email to ucu@leeds.ac.uk, or by post to UCU Office, Parkinson Building, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT. The UCU Office is room 412 on the 4th floor of the Parkinson Building.

The Leeds University UCU Administrator is Sue Redhead, s.j.redhead@leeds.ac.uk, who is usually in the UCU Office Monday - Friday 9.30 - 2.30.

Our website is at:

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ucu> is regularly updated as is the national union website <http://www.ucu.org.uk/>.



University and College Union

JOIN UCU

STRENGTH

UCU brings together professionals across further and higher education and uses its strength to negotiate better pay and conditions on everyone's behalf

INFLUENCE

UCU speaks up when decisions are made about education policy that affect you

PROTECTION

UCU protects your interests in the workplace

SUPPORT

UCU supports members when they have a problem at work

Almost 120,000 of your colleagues have chosen to belong to UCU – the largest union and most effective voice for people like you working in post-school education.

Your local contact is:

Sue Redhead, UCU Office,
Parkinson Building Room 412

www.ucu.org.uk

Invite a friend to join the UCU	Tear off and send to the UCU Office, 4 th floor, Parkinson Building, University of Leeds	
Name	Department	Email address