

UNISON AGM - Edinburgh Napier University Branch

Tuesday 13th March 2018

Present: 28 in attendance

Secretary: Derek Baird (DB)

Convenor: Gary Britton (GB)

Minutes: Callum Wilson (CW)

In attendance: Emma Phillips – Edinburgh Napier Branch Full Time Official

Apologies: 2 Members

Introduction and Welcome - Gary Britton

The meeting was brought to order and members in attendance welcomed.

The AGM was confirmed as quorate.

Minutes of the previous meeting were passed as a fair and accurate record.

Overview of activities in 2017 – Derek Baird

DB stated that there had been a number of disputes over the past year and went on to give an overview:

Redundancy Policy – This is now at the stage of a 3rd meeting being organised between the Unions and HR. Discussions are ongoing.

My Contribution – With the annual reviews coming up, this is ongoing and members will be updated shortly.

Fixed Holidays – The proposal to remove a number of fixed public holidays and add them to annual leave was put to the Unions by HR/ULT. The Union members voted on whether to accept or reject the proposal. The Unison membership rejected the proposal, however EIS members accepted it. This matter has therefore hit an impasse and will be discussed at the next fortnightly consultation meeting with HR. Members will be updated once new information becomes available.

Branch membership numbers were reported to be remaining steady with a good number of new members joining and a similar number of members leaving through natural wastage reasons such as retirement, job changes etc.

DOCAS (Deduction of Contributions at Source) – The fee charged by the University for membership being deducted from payroll is to be renegotiated. This currently stands at 5% and is the highest in Scottish HE. It should not be this high and efforts will be made to reduce it, particularly given that the system is now up and running.

Membership paid by direct debit – Members were reminded of the importance of keeping their membership details up to date. Because membership rates are based on pay scale, if a member changes role and their pay changes, their membership rate will not automatically update. Contact details including email address should also be kept up to date.

Treasurers Report – Libby Hulme

Branch finances are healthy with spend for 2017 being down on the previous year. This was largely due to Publicity and Other Expenses. The surplus for 2017 has resulted in a good cash reserve, for which a plan needs to be formulated to ensure best use is made of it.

GB thanked Libby for her services over the previous years in fulfilling the role of Treasurer.

The way forward – Gary Britton

GB outlined the current state of the working relationship with HR. As a result, a number of questions have been put to the membership in recent months to obtain their feedback and support. Examples included the changes to policies that affect staff and the Union. The membership were reminded of the attack on the Recognition Agreement and that they might be asked in the coming year if they are prepared to stand together collectively to protect their working conditions. They were reminded that this might involve the need for industrial action in some form, but that this did not necessarily mean striking which would always be a last resort.

Election of Branch Officials

All nominations for branch committee posts were elected as follows:

| | |
|-----------|----------------|
| Chair | Gary Britton |
| Secretary | Derek Baird |
| Treasurer | Stefan Lehneke |
| H&S Rep | Barry Fraser |
| Steward | Callum Wilson |
| Steward | Stewart Walls |
| Steward | John Wood |
| Steward | Grant Cullen |
| NSA Rep | Maxine Wood |

Motions

5 Motions were presented:

Motion to adopt aggregate AGMs – Carried with the provision that a review is carried out after one year.

Motion to enforce Rules: 6.1; 7.2.1 & 7.2.2 – Carried.

Motion to create educational materials – Carried.

Motion to create Workplace Contacts – Carried.

Motion to move from Servicing Union approach to Organising Union approach – Carried.

Items for discussion

Presentations were given to highlight various areas of concern to the Union, namely:

HERA panel – CW outlined what the HERA process was and the framework agreement that covered its introduction into the HE sector. The framework agreement and all guidance documentation outlines the importance of partnership working between the Unions and HR and the need for transparency in the process. This is what commonly happens at other institutions. The issue of Unison once again being excluded by HR from the HERA grading panel was, however highlighted and the possible need to take positive action in the coming year was raised.

Workforce planning – GB discussed the continued move towards a 50:50 staff ratio and the implications that this will have.

Facility time – DB outlined the principle of facility time and what its purpose is. He went on to discuss the issues that have been experience in the past year with obtaining facility time to perform Union business.

AOB

The floor was opened to the members. Areas raised as follows:

Fixed holiday proposals - Further concerns were raised regarding the proposal to remove the fixed public holidays and the possibility that taking time off on the public holidays concerned would become impossible. Concerns were also raised that line managers might authorise these holidays in a biased manner, favouring some staff over others.

Car parking charges – It was noted that the Union should be pursuing the abolition of parking charges.

Regular meetings – It was suggested that the Union should have members' meetings more often than just the AGM. It was suggested that periodic meetings would encourage member participation and allow discussion of the collective conscious.

Honorarium

The allocation of £300 honorarium to the outgoing treasurer was put to the vote and passed unanimously.

Prize draw

The draw for completed nomination forms was made, with a prize of £50 going to Paola Renucci.

Closing remarks

There being no further business, GB thanked the members for attending and closed the meeting.