**UNISON AGM Edinburgh Napier University Branch**

Wednesday 1st March 2017

Present: 29 in attendance.

Convenor and Secretary: Derek Baird and Gary Britton.

Minutes: Maxine Wood.

In attendance: Emma Phillips and Kirst Johnston (Edinburgh Branch Full Time Officials).

Apologies: 3 members.

Introduction and Welcome – Derek Baird

Confirmation AGM was quorum.

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

Matters Arising – Gary Britton

1. **HE Governance Bill** has been passed and will now require Universities, by 2020, to facilitate two trade union representatives and two members of staff (one academic and one professional services) a place on the University Court.
2. **Branch re-organisation.** Due to voluntary severance a number of Branch representatives left the University and the Branch has been actively recruiting to the vacant positions. The meeting was asked to confirm the appointment of the branch officials outlined in Appendix A.
3. **Membership Recruitment.** Branch officials have been actively recruiting new members following the losses arising from voluntary severance. Current membership is around XXX.
4. **Branch Finances** are healthy and managed by Libby Hulme.
5. **TU Bill** has progressed through Parliament and Emma Phillips will give an update.

2016 Report – Gary Britton

Branch officials and members lost through voluntary severance. The aim has to been to rebuild the branch with the support of Emma and Kirsty and recruitment has been reasonably successful. Kirsty will continue to work with the branch for 2017/18 for approximately 1 day a week although latterly she has committed more time to ENU because of the number of ongoing issues.

Industrial relations with the University Management are particularly poor at the moment with the move to corporatisation practices with associated policies.

The University policies are being developed to support the implementation of Strategy 2020 and inherent within this would seem to be:

1. Further cuts/redundancies within professional services
2. Role descriptor changes and work intensification
3. Failure to consult appropriately with recognised Unions and refusal to re-introduce the Avoidance of Redundancy Committee (ARC)

In general the situation is not very productive for collective bargaining.

Update provided on ‘My Contribution’.

My Contribution is aligned to delivering on Strategy 2020 and has 3 key aspects:

1. Objective setting in line with strategy 2020
2. Action and resources required to achieve the objective
3. Review based upon a rating system.

UNISON and EIS submitted a joint dispute regarding some of the terms within the proposed framework and as per the recognition agreement this required there to be 2 dispute meetings seeking resolution before formal action could be taken.

The Unions believe that My Contribution is actually a performance management tool which could result in an increase in Performance Improvement Policy (PIP) and Capability Policy being enacted within which the ultimate penalty would be to sack an individual.

My Contribution replaces the current PDR framework but as PDR is referenced in contracts this means that any new framework should be subject to negotiation. The Unions felt that the University had breached these terms.

The dispute related to:

1. Releasing a statement on implementation of My Contribution on the staff intranet prior to consultation taking place.
2. Imposition of unilateral objectives and a grievance process
3. Imposition of ratings
4. Failure to allocate sufficient resources

Two dispute meetings took place attended by both EIS and UNISON and there were some gains as follows:

1. Objectives should be mutually agreed and a review panel established
2. Ratings will remove the ‘How’ but keep the ‘What’

UNSION branch continues to recommend opposition to the ratings for reasons relating to:

1. Will fundamentally change the dynamic of collective bargaining
2. Will move the focus to individuals and not a group assessment
3. Likely to be ‘forced ratings’ in each category

So while there have been some gains and the initial framework will be ‘mild’ to begin with the reality is that the framework will develop over time and the risk is that it evolves into what the University had as its original intention. In this sense any acceptance of the framework could be viewed as the thin edge of the wedge.

Questions:

1. How is it recorded and the life span?

On HR connect, will be readily accessible to managers and enable comparisons, record exists indefinitely

1. Adequate resources for professional development across departments?

As strategy 2020 has mainly an academic focus then realistically the majority of the resources will be allocated to this areas. One additional problem is if management reject objectives which have a cost associated with them then these will not appear on the system and so it will not be possible to make comparisons.

1. How will objectives be set?

Proposal is for lower grades that objectives are automatically populated with generic objectives which defeats the point of the exercise i.e improved performance and will not attract/need additional resource. Staff on these grades will effectively be treated differently to other grades.

Additional discussion took place.

Options put to the members:

1. Accept dispute resolution
2. Action short of strike. Discussion took place around what this might look like.
3. Strike action with EIS. This would need a consultation ballot across the branch where there is a membership of around XXX. Noted that there would be some financial resource to support members on lower pay scales.

Vote of hands and unanimous rejection of 1 and in favour of 2 and 3.

Agreed a communication strategy was central to success and that those present would also be instrumental in galvanising support amongst members.

Election of Branch Officials

All nominations elected.

Expenses and Honorarium

Purpose of honorarium explained. Agreed an allocation of £300 would be given to Libby for her work on the branch accounts.

In general the branch finances were healthy and expenses largely related to employing Kirsty one day a week.

A member questioned whether producing and sending leaflets by post was a good use of resources when members could be emailed. It was noted that not all members, especially ones on lower grades either did not have access to computers or did not use computers as part of their daily routine.

2017 Aims

Rejection of My Contribution, while Ratings are present.

Fixed Holiday continued negotiation with exploration of possibility of reducing standard working week to 35 form 36.25 in line with the Higher Education Framework Agreement.

AOB

Car Parking is an ongoing cause for concern both in relation permit charges and availability of spaces at Merchiston. Queried why it was not possible to issue all campus permits for everyone not just car share. It was noted that there seemed to be a move towards privatisation of parking and other areas such as catering.

A member queried if a motorcycle shelter could be built at all the campuses in response to 2 bikes being stolen.

Emma Phillips Review

Emma presented an overview of:

1. New HE Governance Bill
2. Brexit and the potential effect on the HE sector, especially in relation to EU and International student income.
3. Immigration – possibility of restricting EU students
4. SFC reduced funding
5. UNISON pressing the UK government for more of a Scottish/local focus for policy etc.
6. Campaigning for accreditation of organisations offering the living wage
7. TU Bill passed and implications

Raffle

Main prize £50:                 Alan Swinton

Wine:                                   Theresa Thompson

**Appendix A**

Branch Secretary

Nomination:       Gary Britton

Branch Convenor

Nomination:       Derek Baird

Treasurer

Nomination:       Libby Hulme

All three elected unopposed.

Steward/ Representative

Joan Anderson:

Mary Lally:

Stefan Lehneke:

Stewart Walls:

John Wood:

Maxine Wood:

Health & Safety Representative

Gary Britton:

Barry Fraser:

Colin Malcolm:

All elected unopposed.