

... and related

The Newsletter for **Academic Related, Professional Staff** in Higher Education

Representing administrators, librarians, computing and other professional staff in HE

Spring 2016

Chair's Welcome

Welcome to the latest issue of '... And Related', the magazine for Academic Related, Professional Staff (ARPS) members of UCU.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome new ARPS Committee members Andrew Wilson and Sunil Banga, and to thank retiring committee members Patricia Hulme and Eyad Abu-Khiran for their service and commitment. I would also like to welcome new committee secretary Tania Clarke

This issue includes a report of the recent annual meeting of ARPS members, and an article looking at outsourcing and its effect on ARPS members. It also introduces two of our new committee members.

If you have any comments or questions, or ideas on how we can improve engagement with members, please email the ARPS Committee at academicrelated@ucu.org.uk.

The ARPS committee will be conducting a fringe event at Congress titled "Surviving Organisational Change" and would like to warmly invite all ARPS congress delegates to attend.

You can also contact us and keep up to date with all the latest ARPS news on our twitter feed:
UCU Academic Related (@UCU_ARPS) | Twitter

Helen MacCarthy
ARPS Committee Chair

ARPS Annual Meeting Report

The 2016 annual meeting of Academic Related, Professional Staff members took place on 2nd March. The meeting featured speakers, motions and

workshops, as well as electing the new ARPS committee. The highlights are summarised below.

Many thanks to those members who attended the meeting: please let us have your feedback and any ideas you may have about future meetings.

Speakers

Professor Adam Leaver from the University of Manchester gave a presentation on out-sourcing, why we should be concerned, and how it can be resisted. During the debate which followed, it became clear that outsourcing is an issue at many universities, with particular impact on ARPS members.

Will Pickering, UCU Public Affairs and Press Officer, spoke about the Prevent agenda, the new statutory and legal duties under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and why UCU is opposed. Delegates were advised to seek information about what is happening in their institutions, and copies of UCU's Prevent Duty Guidance were circulated.

Liz Lawrence, UCU President, gave a presentation on the Higher Education Context, covering educational values and privatisation and the HE Green Paper. She emphasised that education is not just a commodity, and warned that the Teaching Excellence Framework is a driver for privatisation. She also talked about defending trade union freedom, the 2016 pay campaign and building UCU.

Motions

The following motions were passed. Motion 4 will now be submitted by the ARPS committee to UCU Congress and Motions 2 and 5 to HE Sector Conference. Motion 3 will be submitted to HE Sector Conference by the University of Hull branch.

Motion 1 set ARPS priorities for the year ahead. These include recruitment; protecting terms and conditions; monitoring adherence to the Framework Agreement; resisting de-professionalisation and out-sourcing; the right to career development; playing a full part in any industrial action; communication and engagement; professional body membership; ensuring ARPS members are included in UCU campaigns. This is admittedly a long list, but we wanted to be sure we didn't leave anything out!

Motion 2 noted the decreasing recognition accorded to technical skills by institutional pay and grading arrangements, and called on the committee to campaign for career paths which do not require a switch to management in order to progress and which appropriately reward specialist skills.

Motion 3 noted the increasing amount of organisational change going on in universities and the disproportionate effect on ARPS members, drew attention to UCU guidance on negotiating organisational change policies, and urged branches to consult ARPS members to ensure their needs are covered by local policies.

Motion 4 noted the trend towards outsourcing in UK universities, particularly in IT, and called on UCU to gather information on the extent and effectiveness of outsourcing, using Freedom of Information requests if necessary.

Motion 5 noted with dismay the moves by the University of Nottingham to apparently abandon the framework agreement, and called on UCU to reissue guidance and documents relating to the agreement and memorandum of understanding.

Workshops

Workshop 1 – Recruitment: The workshop looked at existing UCU recruitment materials, and the 'ARPS Manifesto', and came up with a number of ideas. It was agreed to update the manifesto over the next year, and also produce posters and leaflets specifically aimed at Academic Related, Professional Staff.

Workshop 2 – Outsourcing: The workshop comprised a wide-ranging discussion about the threat of outsourcing and how it can be tackled. The need for

information about what is happening in different institutions is paramount, and the group agreed on the need for debate both locally and nationally.

Summary

The 2016 annual ARPS meeting provided a forum for debate about issues facing members. It is clear that ARPS members are under attack in many institutions, with the framework agreement being abandoned, outsourcing and downgrading becoming rife. We need to work together to raise awareness of the issues facing us, and to remind the outside world, as well as our academic colleagues, that UCU is not just a union of lecturers. Please contact us if you would like to get involved.

Introducing new committee members

Sharon Sweeney



Sharon Sweeney is the Student Funding Officer at the University of Dundee.

Sharon studied at the University of Dundee and trained as a Community Education Worker. Bringing her experience to the university, Sharon built up her own team dealing with a very specific function. Working closely with students individually and in groups, Sharon and the team work to support students whose financial situation can take them to a 'do I stay, or do I go' discussions. Working at the 'sharp edge' supporting students during what can be a very complex and difficult situation, Sharon's commitment to empowerment is key as it is vital that students are supported where they are at, rather than being told what they should do.

Working closely with academics and other support services, often provides a more holistic university support to students which can aid students remaining on course. This is an area of continued pressure due to the restraints imposed upon staff due to governments' decisions and the cuts/restructuring within universities as a whole.

A member of the Dundee University UCU Committee, Sharon is the current Branch Secretary and is involved in other UCU national arenas. Sharon is the Equality Officer for UCU Scotland, is a new member to the ARPS Committee and is the current Chair of the STUC Disabled Workers' Committee. Sharon has recently served on the UCU Disabled Members' Standing Committee where her last role was as Vice-Chair.

Sunil Banga



I work at University of Lancaster, as Head of Lancaster University International Study Centre. I have been in this job since June 2009, after a very brief stint at research after my

Masters in 2008 from Lancaster University Management School. I am an executive committee member of UCU Lancaster branch and a caseworker, but relatively new to UCU, having joined in 2013. I have been co-opted as a member of the ARPS committee this year, and I am currently also Academic related rep for the Lancaster branch.

My trade union roots go back to my University days in Delhi, India, when I was the elected vice president of the students union for 3 years. Subsequently I joined Boots (India) and was a member of the Delhi committee of Boots Employees Union for a number of years. I started taking active interest in union matters after I joined the UCU in 2013, following a work place issue, as a way of expressing my thanks and gratitude to UCU for the support and advice they provided at the time.

I am still very much a 'newby' and finding my feet, but at the same time I am very keen to get more involved. I want us to be a strong trade union, given the threat of privatisation and the neoliberal agenda which treats education as a commodity for individual benefit. I think we all in the education sector work here because we care for and are passionate about what we give back to the community, and recognise that our profession has a special role and its own special values. I would like to fight for these values and defend our sector against government attacks,

but also importantly I want to represent the views of all Lancaster Academic related staff.

I look forward to contributing to the UCU, and the ARPS committee, to the best of my ability.

Privatisation not Outsourcing

It was more than 70 years ago that Karl Polanyi said - "...To allow the market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment, indeed, even of the amount and use of purchasing power, would result in the demolition of society. For the alleged commodity, "labour power" cannot be shoved about, used indiscriminately, or even left unused, without affecting the human individual who happens to be the bearer of this peculiar commodity".

We are at an important juncture. While the full implications of the green paper, [Fulfilling our potential: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice](#) are not clear, the current governments agenda, described by David Cameron as '[breaking open the closed shop](#)', has been described by many as nothing short of a disaster. The green paper, or the forthcoming white paper on HE, give no explanation at all for creating more competition through privatisation, removing barriers of entry and exit for new entrants, and the creation of new quality assurance structures. What is the need for this? What does this tell us about the government's view on the sector? Is the current government working in the best interests of students and taxpayers, or is it that, as Andrew McGettigan, author of [The Great University Gamble: Money, Markets and the Future of Higher Education](#) says "investors and hedge funds are lobbying the government to open the sector up to something that's more in tune with their investor cycle."

It is worrying that the neoliberal agenda arguing for education as a private benefit, as a commodity which can be opened up to market mechanisms, has also found sympathy within leadership and ranks of Labour to an extent. The connections made between getting a degree and a good job and therefore benefitting the individual completely lose sight of the public benefits

across society in terms of health, employment, and social development and cohesion.

To suggest that there is an economic rationale behind outsourcing/privatisation in the education sector is perverse. We need to keep in mind that markets are for profit, not for promoting learning. Nonetheless, the economic advantages of education have long been established, and we need to now take a more nuanced approach to outsourcing/privatisation. The words 'outsourcing' and 'privatisation' are often used interchangeably; however, the purpose of this article is not to debate the meanings of these two words but to reiterate concerns which have been around for a few decades about what these two activities mean for employees, particularly in the context of redundancies and restructurings which we have all got used to and have been affected by in one form or other.

It has become quite commonplace that Universities are contracting with outside companies or other agencies to perform 'non-core' business functions, notably IT and Libraries. Some other administrative functions, such as payroll, accounting or cleaning and catering services are also commonly contracted out. A few years ago, UCU published *International students and pathway provision: The case against the private sector*, and [Privatising our Universities](#); which explore the 'outsourcing' of student recruitment and foundation pathway provision to private providers such as Study Group, Kaplan, Into and Navitas, with private equity ownership structures, and question the profit models of these organisations. It is clear now that the motivation for these companies in setting up the partnerships was to [gain a foothold to expand](#) into recruitment of students, delivery of courses from Level 3-6, provision of pre-sessional and in-sessional programmes, and in some case, even service provision like accommodation (Into?). This has led to more and more in-house provision being closed and staff made redundant. Therefore we need to ask: is this outsourcing a guise for privatisation? Although there is no upfront income from selling assets in outsourcing models, effectively outsourcing is making public services private in the name of efficiency and improvement. The fact of the matter is that outsourcing, in whatever shape of form, is an ominous

harbinger of encroachment in Universities taking place by private companies once they get a foothold.

Given that the economic rationale behind outsourcing/privatisation is questionable and there is no evidence of cost savings, rather any cost savings achieved are through lowering wages and conditions for employees and lower quality services, we need to start challenging assumptions and ask what can be done to fight against these trends and put a stop to these practices. UCU has a [Fighting privatisation toolkit, Making the case against outsourcing](#), which outlines the case against outsourcing; however, we cannot wait for outsourcing to happen before we start fighting it.

The debate must be reframed in the context that ALL outsourcing proposals must be resisted. We must make a clear and convincing case that we cannot allow companies to keep taking profits and play roulette with the risks (as put very eloquently by Professor Adam Leaver at the ARPS annual members meeting). As a sector we must speak out - now - loudly and proudly.

Sunil Banga

UCU National Recruitment Week

The next National Recruitment Week will run from 16th to 20th May. The UCU campaigns team have produced a recruitment leaflet and poster aimed specifically at Academic Related, Professional Staff. To order copies, email Martin Whelton mwhelton@ucu.org.uk

ARPS Committee Members

Helen MacCarthy	Hull (Chair)
Tim Barrett	Bath (Vice Chair)
Kamie Kitmitto	Manchester
Paul Siddall	Essex
Mark Dover	Southampton
Sharon Sweeney	Dundee
Andrew Wilson	LSE
Sunil Banga	Lancaster
Jo McNeill	NEC
Roger Brooks	NEC
Tania Clarke	Committee Secretary