

Dear Colleagues,

17th February 2020

Following a discussion at the Senior Management Group meeting on Wednesday 12th February (including Heads of Departments, College Executives, Directors of Services and Student Representatives) it was agreed that I would clarify to the University community what we have been doing to find a resolution to the current dispute. Our understanding is that the dispute is focussed on pensions, pay, casualisation, workload and equality.

1. In relation to the pension dispute, I can confirm that in response to the latest UUK consultation the University of Exeter would be willing to be put back on the table the offer of an additional 0.5% employer contribution. This offer was previously made by UUK to the UCU but was rejected by the UCU HEC without consultation with members late last summer.
2. We remain committed to ensuring the USS pension continues to be one of the very best schemes in the country. We have been fully supportive of the recommendations of the Joint Expert Panel (JEP), as well as the recommendations outlined in the JEP2 report, which was released in December 2019.
3. In relation to pay, we were one of only three institutions (out of 147) who proposed to increase the current pay offer. As this move was not agreed by the majority of universities and we are bound by national bargaining, UCEA had no mandate to re-open the national pay negotiations.
4. Following my emails to all staff in September 2018 and December 2019, in which we committed ourselves to ending casualisation, we continue working together as a community to resolving these institutional dilemmas. This has led to the creation of the Fair Employment For All working group.
5. We are working closely with colleagues, trade unions and student representatives on casual employment, workload, and gender and race equality through the Positive Working Environment groups alongside the Fair Employment For All working group.

The work of these groups builds on our continued commitment to improve the working conditions of colleagues here at the University and follows on from our previous actions which have included: paying the voluntary Living Wage to contracted staff and casual workers, launching our sector-leading parental benefits for all, and improving our pay scales for Lecturers and Senior Lecturers.

I hope this clarifies the University's collective efforts to resolve the issues at the heart of the dispute. I also want to assure all colleagues that I will continue to work proactively and tirelessly with all parties and I am still hopeful that together as a community we can find a way to resolve these national disputes without the need for further strike action.

With best wishes,

Steve

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