Dear Colleagues,

As you will be aware, national level talks have been taking place throughout January in order to find a resolution to the ongoing USS pension and national pay negotiation disputes.

The University and College Union (UCU) has announced further strike dates in relation to both of these issues. The dates for further planned strike action, are set out below:

- Thursday 20 and Friday 21 February (two consecutive days)
- Monday 24 – Wednesday 26 February (three consecutive days)
- Monday 2 March – Thursday 5 March (four consecutive days)
- Monday 9 March – Friday 13 March (five consecutive days)

I know the prospect of further industrial action will be of concern to many of you, as well as for many of our students, and I am hopeful that the national talks set to take place in February and March will lead to an agreed resolution to the issues above.

Here at the University we are working with colleagues, student representatives and trade unions on casual employment, through the Fair Employment For All working group, as well as workload and gender and race equality. These local initiatives build on the new national offer made by UCEA last week.

I also wanted to reassure you that we’ve been continuing to regularly meet with colleagues across the University, as well as the Students’ Guild and Students’ Union, to carefully manage the potential impact this further period of industrial action may have on our University community, and to ensure any measures we put in place are the right ones for you and for our students.

I will be emailing our students today to share the details of the planned industrial action with them, and to let them know how to access further information, including signposting them to the student FAQs and the dedicated email address to use should they have any specific queries: industrialaction@exeter.ac.uk.

We’ve also developed an FAQ page for colleagues and I would like to highlight the resources that are available to support you, if needed. This includes our self-help tool, Pro-Counselling, which can be used to access 24/7 telephone counselling via our online portal, an online wellbeing space, and face-to-face counselling.

As with the previous period of industrial action, Imelda Rogers, our Director of HR, will write to you to give you further information about what to do if you intend to participate in strike action, or action short of a strike, so please do look out for further messages and details.

In the meantime, should you have any immediate concerns or queries, please do email me directly via vice-chancellor@exeter.ac.uk and I will ensure you receive a prompt response.

With best wishes,

Steve

Professor Sir Steve Smith FAcSS