

UCU Glasgow General Meeting

Minutes

24 January 2024

12noon – 1.30pm

Chair: Jenny Morrison

1. Welcome & introductions

Jenny Morrison welcomed members to the meeting, and explained that due to cancelled trains the meeting will only take place online, rather than in hybrid form from the Dumfries campus.

2. Minutes from last meeting: Minutes GM 29 November 2023

The minutes from the last meeting were accepted.

3. Matters Arising

a. Change to Semester 2 timetables

After UCU Glasgow raised concerns relating to the proposed mandatory introduction to a consolidation week in Semester 2, the University has parked these suggestions. However, Senate did agree that Semester 2 will not ever start before January 11, a change which will only have an impact in 2028.

b. Visa payments

Maha Rafi Atal, UCU Glasgow migrant member rep, reported that the migrant members subcommittee have put together a proposal about visa fees and reimbursement. The University have provisionally agreed to support migrant members dealing with visa fees, but only for some visas. A meeting is scheduled to discuss this with the University later this week.

c. Divestment

Anton Muscatelli has confirmed via email that the University has divested from fossil fuels, but we would like to see more evidence on this. A Finance Committee meeting of Court is taking place today, to discuss divesting from the arms industry.

4. Motions to UCU Scotland Congress (available at the bottom of this document)

The following five motions were debated and the meeting voted to send to UCU Scotland Congress. Motion texts can be found below.

Motion 1 - Action on Green Issues. Proposed by Marion Hersh, seconded by Helen Hardman.

Motion 2– Palestine and Military Involvement. Proposed by Marion Hersh, seconded by Sarah Currier.

Motion 3 - Supporting Palestinian Scholars and Students. Proposed by Kirsteen Paton, seconded by Ashli Mullen.

Motion 4 - Palestine and LGBTQ+ Rights. Proposed by Sarah Currier, seconded by Marion Hersh.

Motion 5 - Resolution for UCU Scotland Congress. Proposed by Jeanette Findlay, seconded by Diarmaid Kelliher.

5. Local motions (available at the bottom of this document)

The following local motions were debated and passed.

Motion 1 - Call for Special Sector Conference. Proposed by Marion Hersh, seconded by Duncan Lowther.

Motion 2 - Aberdeen dispute. Proposed by Helen Hardman, seconded by Marion Hersh.

Motion 3 - #StandWithGaza Workplace Day of Action. Proposed by Jenny Morrison, seconded by Maureen McBride.

Motion 4 - University of Glasgow support for Palestinian scholars and students. Proposed by Kirsteen Paton, seconded by Ashli Mullen.

While debating Motion 5 - Draft Guidance on Gender-Questioning Children Consultation, the meeting lost quoracy. The motion will be passed to the Committee to discuss.

6. PGR students

Niall Ingham, GTA Rep, informed the meeting that PGR students can now join UCU as full members, meaning they can participate in internal elections. PGR students can join for 99p per month. All members are encouraged to

7. General Secretary Elections – hustings

There will be a husting for all four General Secretary candidates on 13 February 2024, at 1.30pm. Members can attend either online, or in person at the UWS Paisley campus. This meeting was organised by UWS UCU branch originally and then expanded by asking other Scottish branches to attend. UCU Scotland President Jeanette Findlay will chair the hustings.

8. UCU Scotland Congress – delegates

UCU Glasgow is looking for delegates to attend UCU Scotland Congress 2024, on 22 March 2024 in Clydebank. Duncan Lowther volunteered as a delegate.

9. AOB

a. Freedom to Run – Palestine solidarity film screening

No more tickets available, but members can be added to the waiting list by emailing scotland@ucu.org.uk.

b. Business travel working group

Chrissy Sanachan, UCU Glasgow Environmental Rep, encouraged members to get in touch with her about concerns and feedback relating to international business travel.

Motions for UCU Scotland Congress

Motion 1 - Action on Green Issues

Proposer: Marion Hersh

Seconder: Helen Hardman

Congress reaffirms the importance of taking action climate change and other environmental issues.

Congress calls on the Green officer and Green network to:

1. Obtain information on institution policy and practices on
 - a. business travel and any evidence of it being applied in a discriminatory way.
 - b. Environmental and accessibility aspects of institutional estates and built environment, including new buildings.
 - c. The use of carbon offsetting
2. Members' views of the conflicts between the need to travel for research and for international students and environmental issues.
3. Organise a hybrid workshop on the above issues

Motion 2– Palestine and Military Involvement

Proposer: Marion Hersh

Seconder: Sarah Currier

Congress notes and affirms UCU Congress policy to support and campaign

1. For Palestinian rights and justice
2. Against arms

3. Against arms sales and for ceasefire.

Congress deplors and condemns

1. Hamas attack on Israeli civilians
2. Genocidal response of Israeli Government.
3. Previous oppression of Palestinians, including land clearances.

Congress notes

1. Several institutions and members are involved in work, particularly research and training, with links to the military, including Israeli military.
2. Lack of UCU advice and guidelines on these issues

Congress agrees to

1. Affiliate to Campaign Against Arms Trade
2. Campaign actively and encourage members to write to MPs to end arms sales to Israel and for a cease fire.
3. Support Israeli opposition groups, particularly conscientious objectors.
4. Urgently issue advice and guidelines to members and branches on military involvement and how to withdraw from it

Motion 3 - Supporting Palestinian Scholars and Students

Proposer: Kirsteen Paton

Seconder: Ashli Mullen

UCU Scotland notes:

1. Universities Scotland and the Scottish Government worked with universities to find ways to support Ukrainian students and scholars
2. The Scottish Government offered students displaced from Ukraine the opportunity to apply for free tuition and living costs and introduced a £1 million International Students' Emergency Fund.
3. Universities UK established a Twinning with Ukraine scheme offering financial and academic support

UCU Scotland believes:

These resources at a minimum should be provided to support Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank

UCU Scotland resolves to:

1. Lobby Universities Scotland and the Scottish Government to offer support financial support through the International Student Emergency Fund
2. Lobby Universities Scotland and the Scottish Government to explore ways to provide support to Palestinian scholars and students
3. Take this issue to NEC for UCU to demand that Universities UK offer support to Palestinians, at minimum matched to their Ukraine scheme

Motion 4 - Palestine and LGBTQ+ Rights

Proposer: Marion Hersh

Seconders: Sarah Currier, Caroline Haig

Congress reaffirms its support for the Palestine struggle.

Congress notes and deplores:

1. The particular problems experienced by Palestinian LGBTQ+ people under the Israeli government occupation and genocide.
2. Pinkwashing, i.e. “when a state or organization appeals to LGBTQ+ rights in order to deflect attention from its harmful practices”¹ by the Israeli government and its supporters, promoting the view that the occupation and genocide are beneficial to LGBTQ+ people.

Congress calls on the UCU Scotland Executive to:

1. Identify and make solidarity links with LGBTQ+ organisations in Palestine, and the Palestinian diaspora.
2. Organise an event with Palestinian LGBTQ+ speakers, consulting with them to ensure their voices and priorities are centred.
3. Challenge pinkwashing by the Israeli government and its supporters.
4. Continue to encourage members to attend broad-based Palestinian demos and meetings; organise a UCU bloc as part of a wider trade union bloc; and encourage branches to bring their banners.

Motion 5 - Resolution for UCU Scotland Congress

Proposer: Jeanette Findlay
Seconder: Craig Daly

This branch notes the decision of the 2023 UCU Scotland Congress to explore new ways of bargaining and to engage with other campus trades unions in Scotland. We further note the success of negotiations in other sectors eg NHS, which negotiate on a Scotland as well as on a UK basis. Finally, we note the continuing failure of New JNCHES to deliver for our members and the ongoing discussions of our NEC in relation to our future bargaining strategy.

We call on UCU Scotland Congress (2024) to

1. Pursue discussions with branches and with UCU with a view to ensuring that the possible benefits of bargaining on some matters on a Scotland basis is fully discussed
2. Pursue with UCU the necessity of ensuring that the particular political and sectoral features of the devolved nations are fully considered, and any political levers utilised, in any future bargaining strategy.

Local motions

Motion 1 - Call for Special Sector Conference

Proposer: Marion Hersh
Seconder: Vladimir Unkovski-Korica

UCU Glasgow notes:

1. Continuing pay erosion, equality pay gaps, increasing workloads, casualisation and cuts.
2. The possibility of redundancy threats in response to increasing costs of the post-92 pension schemes.
3. The lack of an agreed strategy on winning the Four fights dispute.

UCU Glasgow calls for a SHESC on 'the future of the Four Fights/JNCHES disputes, including a potential TPS dispute.

Motion 2 - Aberdeen dispute

Proposer: Marion Hersh

Seconder: Helen Hardman

UCU Glasgow deplores proposals by senior managers at Aberdeen University to cut the provision of modern languages at the university which will see job cuts and the end of languages as a single honours subject.

UCUG resolves to

1. Send a solidarity message to Aberdeen UCU and a £250 donation to their hardship fund.
2. Encourage members to [sign the petition](#) to save languages at Aberdeen
3. Encourage members to write to their MSPs to sign two motions in the Scottish Parliament from Mercedes Villalba (available [here](#)) and Kevin Stewart (available [here](#))
4. Write to the Aberdeen principal about the great value and importance of language provision and to withdraw the cuts

Motion 3 - #StandWithGaza Workplace Day of Action

Proposer: Vladimir Unkovski-Korica

Seconder: Jenny Morrison

UCU Glasgow notes:

1. The statement by UCU nationally that 'UCU joins with many others in Palestine, the UK, and beyond to reiterate the demands for an immediate ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, unrestricted access to humanitarian aid, and the lifting of the siege of Gaza.'
2. That UCU nationally supports the #StandWithGaza Workplace Day of Action called by Stop the War Coalition and CND on Wednesday 7th February to call for a ceasefire in Gaza.

UCU Glasgow resolves to:

1. Call a protest on campus at lunch time on Wed 07 Feb calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.
2. To contact other campus unions, the SRC and student campaigns to coordinate a joint protest.
3. To publicise the protest to branch members and encourage them to participate in this and the other actions as detailed at <https://www.ucu.org.uk/CeasefireNow>

Motion 4 - University of Glasgow support for Palestinian scholars and students

Proposer: Kirsteen Paton

Seconder: Ashli Mullen

This branch notes:

1. All universities in Gaza have now been damaged or destroyed and many academics have been killed by Israeli occupation forces
2. The generous support that the UoG gave to Ukrainian scholars and students in response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict

The branch believes:

UofG should, at minimum, match these resources Palestinian scholar and students, specifically

1. Consult with Palestinians in the academic and local community to identify ways the university can provide support
2. Open a donation hub to raise money for humanitarian relief in Gaza
3. Lobby Universities Scotland and Universities UK to offer support, including a Twinning Scheme
4. Lobby Scottish Government to offer Palestinians settling in Scotland the opportunity to apply for free tuition and living costs
5. Twin with a university in Gaza to find ways to directly support scholars and students
6. Create additional Sanctuary Scholarships for Palestinian students
7. Set-up a Dima Alhaj memorial for hardship funds and scholarships

Motion 5 - Draft Guidance on Gender-Questioning Children Consultation

Proposer: Sarah Currier

Seconder: Caroline Haig

UCUG notes:

1. Publication on 19/12/23 of UK Government Consultation on Draft Guidance for Schools on Gender-Questioning Children, deadline 22/3/241.
2. The Guidance will apply in England.

UCUG believes:

1. The Guidance includes potentially harmful recommendations, including that parents should be informed if their child requests to socially transition, rather than supporting the child according to their needs and circumstances;
2. The Guidance will put gender-questioning children in England at risk, and contribute to a UK-wide chilling effect on LGBTQ+ rights and gender-affirming care, similar to the effect of Section 28 in the 1980s.

UCUG will:

1. Call on the UCUG LGBTQ+ Subcommittee plus additional volunteers to review the draft guidelines and consultation and prepare a response from our Branch, to be submitted to the Branch Committee and, if agreed, to the next GM, 28/2/24 for approval.
2. Publicise the consultation to members and encourage them to respond individually.