

## **UCU Glasgow General meeting**

28 January 2025

12noon – 1.30pm

### **MINUTES**

Chair: Duncan Lowther

#### 1. Welcome & Introductions

Duncan Lowther, Branch Treasurer, welcomed members to the meeting.

#### 2. Updates from motions from November 2024 General Meeting

Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, Branch Secretary, reported that following the last General Meeting in November, the Committee has written to Court to ask for a new Court meeting on the divestment question, as well as to Anton Muscatelli to ask the University to call for an immediate arms embargo on Israel.

No Sustainability meeting has taken place since the last meeting, and the actions around office space are being taken forward.

#### 3. Branch updates

##### a. SPHSU

Richard Reeve, Branch President, updated that a voluntary severance scheme is currently open and the union expects to be informed of uptake thereof at a meeting in February. UCU is also awaiting the outcome into an investigation about the University not following due process around an EIA regarding the MRC cuts. The results of this investigation should be made to University Court on 19 February.

##### b. Subcommittees

The Equalities Subcommittee is looking at setting up a group for disabled and neurodivergent members, and anyone interested should keep an eye out for an email about this.

c. Pay spine negotiations

Richard updated that for over two years now the unions have engaged with the University in good faith around the pay spine negotiations, but the University has been very slow to respond or make a feasible offer. There is a meeting on Friday, 31 January where unions are hoping to receive an offer. The other campus trade unions are very disappointed by the University's behavior and are considering next steps.

4. Rally at Scottish Parliament – Wednesday, 29 January 2025

UCU Scotland Officers have called a rally outside the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday to demand better funding for Higher Education. If members want to attend and help carry the branch banner, transport can be refunded and they should get in touch with the UCU Glasgow Office.

5. UCU Scotland Congress motions

Motion 1 - Assisted Dying was proposed by Marion Hersh and seconded formally by Richard Reeve. The motion was carried.

Motion 2 - Redundancies at Glasgow University was proposed by Marion Hersh and seconded by Eric Silverman. Debates on motion 2 and 3 as well as local motion 1 were grouped together as they were all relating to the same issue. This motion was carried.

Motion 3 - MRC unit funding cuts and open-ended contracts was proposed by Richard Reeve and seconded by Elise Whitley. The motion was carried.

Motion 4 – Social Media was proposed by Sam Rutherford and seconded by Matt Mahon. Vladimir Unkovski-Korica proposed an amendment, which was seconded by Richard Reeve. Debates on motion 4 as well as local motion 2 were grouped

together as they were all relating to the same issue. The amendment passed, and the motion was carried as amended.

6. Local motions

Local motion 1 - MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit Closure was proposed by Marion Hersh and seconded by Eric Silverman. An amendment was proposed by Elise Whitley and seconded by Richard Reeve. The amendment fell, and the motion was carried.

Local motion 2 – Social Media was proposed by Sam Rutherford and seconded by Marion Hersh. Vladimir Unkovski-Korica proposed an amendment, which was seconded by Richard Reeve. The amendment passed, and the motion was carried as amended.

7. UCU Glasgow delegates for 2025

UCU Glasgow is looking for delegates to attend UCU Scotland Congress in Clydebank in March and UCU Congress in Liverpool in May 2025. Interested members should contact the Branch Office.

8. Date of next meeting: Wednesday, 26 February

9. AOB

- a. Marion Hersh, UCU Scotland Green Officer, informed members that a meeting of the Green Network is taking place on Thursday, 6 February 2025. For details members should contact the UCU Glasgow Office.
- b. Vlad reported that the Serbian government resigned after protests by staff and students.

The meeting ended at 1.23pm.



Motion as passed:

## **UCU Scotland Congress motions**

### **Motion 1: Assisted Dying - PASSED**

Proposer: Marion Hersh, Seconder: Ryan Field

#### Congress notes

1. This is an important and emotive issue where UCU does not have policy.
2. Negative experiences in other countries, the possibility of risks to the health service and to disabled and older people.
3. Strong views on both sides of the debate.

#### Congress believes

1. UCU Scotland needs policy to be able to participate in the debates.
2. A policy decision to either support or oppose assisted dying legislation would be strongly opposed by large numbers of members.

#### Congress calls on the executive to

1. Take a position in debates which does not support or oppose the legislation, but highlights the risks, including as evidenced from other countries, of safeguards being eroded and legislation extended and the risks to older and disabled people and the health service.

2. Draw up a list of member concerns and protective measure to be included in any legislation, without supporting it.

## **Motion 2: Redundancies at Glasgow University - PASSED**

### Congress notes:

1. The threatened close of MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit (SPHSU) on 30 June due to withdrawal of MRC Unit funding.
2. The School of Health and Wellbeing proposing to retain few staff from the SPHSU, despite the University declaring health inequalities a priority 'Research Pillar' and the importance of this expertise.
3. SPHSU closure would set a precedent for future Unit closures, including the UoG Centre for Virus Research.

### Congress believes:

1. We should oppose compulsory redundancies in all cases.
2. UCU Scotland needs to support UCUG in putting pressure on the University to keep the Unit open and retain all staff.
3. SPHSU closure would set a precedent for future Unit closures (CVR at UoG, and two Units/Centers at Edinburgh)

### Congress resolves to:

1. To actively support local action by UCUG.
2. Put pressure on the Scottish Government to make up the shortfall to retain this critical unit and expertise.

### **Motion 3: MRC unit funding cuts and open-ended contracts - PASSED**

#### Congress notes:

1. The Medical Research Council (MRC) has withdrawn funding from its Research Units, including SPHSU at the University of Glasgow (jointly funded by the Scottish Government), resulting in over 70 redundancy notifications already, and more jobs at risk as other units close.
2. Most universities transition research staff onto open-ended contracts occasionally, but without clear policy for how to decide who to retain, the process of protecting staff jobs is arbitrary and subject to local whims.
3. UCU has launched the Researcher Manifesto<sup>1</sup> calling for a pooled resourcing model for research staff.

#### Congress mandates UCU Scotland to:

1. Investigate whether any Scottish universities have clear, open policies on how research staff move onto fully open-ended contracts .
2. Call on Scottish universities to introduce a pooled resourcing model.
3. Call on the Scottish Government and MRC to reverse their decision and restore funding to SPHSU and other affected units .

<sup>1</sup><https://www.ucu.org.uk?mediaid=14732>

### **Motion 4: Social Media - PASSED**

Proposer: Isabel Ruffell, Seconder: Sarah Currier

#### UCU Scotland notes:

1. The deteriorating situation on corporate social media

2. The decision of over 60 German universities and cultural institutions to leave Twitter/X

UCU Scotland resolves:

1. To leave Twitter/X
2. To encourage its members to leave such platforms in favour of non-profit and non-corporate platforms such as Mastodon and Signal
3. To pressure Scottish universities to dissociate themselves from such toxic platforms in favour of non-profit and non-corporate social media.

## **Local motions**

**Local motion 1: MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit Closure - PASSED**

UCU Glasgow notes:

1. The threatened close of MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit (SPHSU) on 30 June due to withdrawal of MRC Unit funding.
2. The School of Health and Wellbeing proposing to retain few staff from the SPHSU, despite the University declaring health inequalities a priority 'Research Pillar' and the importance of this expertise.
3. SPHSU closure would set a precedent for future Unit closures, including the UoG Centre for Virus Research.

UCU Glasgow believes:

1. We should oppose compulsory redundancies in all cases.
2. A strong local response is essential to put pressure on the University to keep the Unit open and retain all staff.

UCU Glasgow resolves:

1. To declare a local dispute with the University of Glasgow regarding its treatment of the SPHSU.

**Local motion 2: Social Media**

Proposer: Isabel Ruffell, Seconder: Marion Hersh

UCUG notes:

1. The deteriorating situation on corporate social media
2. The decision of over 60 German universities and many German cultural institutions and cities to leave Twitter/X
3. The decision of the University of Leeds to leave Twitter/X

UCUG therefore resolves:

1. To dissociate UCU Glasgow and its various components from Twitter/X
2. To pressure the University of Glasgow to dissociate itself from the above social media outlets and to turn to non-profit and non-corporate forms of social media
3. To encourage its members to move their own social media to other platforms, such as Mastodon and Signal
4. To mandate the Communications Officer to convene a working group to write a social media policy and strategy document for approval at a future GM.