



Our newsletter is free to all members.

If you're not a member, we want you to join us.

You can still join UNISON easily on-line.

Just follow the link from our blog on Staff Central.

University of Brighton Branch Newsletter

December 2020

Welcome to the final newsletter of the 2020.

It's been a year which none of us could easily have predicted. University workers have achieved loads under very difficult circumstances and continue to work under challenging conditions.

The vaccine will not alter this at least for the first few months of 2021, and so we still have to make plans on the assumption that much of what we do will still be on-line. We also have to recognise that many University employees will be working on-site with all the safety implications that throws up.

On top of all the usual stress and difficulties of Covid-19, we're experiencing an on-going situation where some of our members are facing compulsory redundancy as a result of changes to IT provision or changes to the new School structure, to be implemented in January.

To their credit, UCU have fought this, whilst we

have faced the frustration of having a regional group of officials, which have blocked our attempt to campaign effectively.

We will continue to do whatever we think is best for our members into 2021, which will require a strategy that resists further redundancies or attacks on our terms and conditions.

The new University Strategy launch paints a difficult picture of a shrinking university with reduced income and which therefore needs to make cuts. We have to reject this logic and campaign for decent funding of universities to protect jobs, pay and pensions.

If you're able to, we wish you all a well-deserved break and we'll face these challenges together in the New Year.

Ivan Bonsell, Branch Secretary

Follow us...

Online: blogs.brighton.ac.uk/unison

Facebook: UNISON at University of Brighton

Twitter: @UniBtonUnison

Pay Consultation



Thanks to all those who took part in the on-line consultation over pay. We urged members to vote to reject the imposed 0% pay award.

Nationally, 86% of those who expressed a view rejected the “offer” on a 35% turnout.

In our branch, 88% rejected the “offer” on a 46% turnout.

We have considered the national results and requested that UNISON organise a national postal ballot in the New Year. For this, we will need to reach the legally required 50% turnout threshold to allow us to take action.

This will be difficult, but we have shown before that we can do it, when we achieved a 52% turnout last time. The difference is that we’re planning a disaggregate ballot, so those branches hitting the target will be able to take action irrespective of how other branches do.

Obviously we want a strong, confident vote across the whole sector, but balloting this way will allow the best organised branches to campaign more effectively for a pay rise for all higher education workers.

To maximise the turnout, we need to do the following:

- * *Make sure that all our members have the correct postal address on our membership system.*
- * *Warn all our members that ballots will be arriving soon and that they need to look out for them.*
- * *Encourage members to vote as soon as possible and let us know when they have done.*
- * *Chase up members ahead of the deadline to make sure that they have voted and/or sort out any problems.*

Achieving a decent turnout in any ballot is not easy, but becomes easier when the members of our branch are aware of what we’re doing and why we’re trying to do it.

Over the years we have tried to keep members engaged and informed and a postal ballot is, to some extent, a test of that. Many members (probably the ones reading this) will vote straight away, but others will need more coaching. The key to getting the turnout up is to adopt a systematic approach and put effort into every individual ballot returned.

We should have more news in the New Year.

Plans for 2021

The branch committee meets for the final time this year in mid-December. We'll be proposing the following:

- ***Our Annual General Meeting will take place in February or March and will be on-line. (If possible, we'll have physical meetings for different groups, but it's looking unlikely.)***
- ***We will hold monthly on-line all members' meetings from January with a timetable available early in the new year so that people can have the dates in diaries.***
- ***We will try to produce recordings of the most important issues so that all members can see what's happening if they can't attend the meetings. (We know not everyone can.)***



- ***We'll discuss and agree our approach to campaigning against Securing our Future and the new Strategy if it means a threat to members' jobs and/or terms and conditions.***
- ***We'll encourage all our members to get involved in the branch, either as stewards, health and safety reps, branch officers or communication contacts.***
- ***If we ballot for action over pay (or anything else) we'll aim for the maximum turnout by a systematic approach where every member is encouraged to vote.***