

Dear members

Some general updates, mostly with nothing significant to report. It is indeed extremely concerning and also sad for the staff that matters take an inordinate length of time to resolve. The UKSU Executive finds it so very difficult and stressful to continuously have to remind HR management for responses and to set down promised meetings but the Executive perseveres for the members. Despite these frustrations, the Executive does realise how frustrating and stressful it is for the members too – together the members and Executive of UKSU can hopefully make some strides.

REMUNERATION BARGAINING

The collective unions of NEHAWU, NTEU, UKSU resolved to refer to the totality of remuneration issues as it is more than just the annual salary increase. Thus the unions requested the costs for the following items:

1. A 5% across the board increase;
2. Adjusting the 2018 salary ranges for the 2018 (7%) + 2019 (7.3%) + 2020 (6%) annual increases;
3. Moving all grade 17 staff to grade 16;
4. Performance Pay Progression for all qualifying staff for the 2018 and 2019 cycles;
5. Performance Based Pay for all qualifying staff for the 2019 cycle;
6. Travel allowance increase for security staff from R12 to R70;
7. Shift allowance increase for security staff from R19 to R50;
8. The first cohort of insourced staff were employed in 2016 on the 2012 conditions of service. However, the adjustments provided to all staff at conversion to the 2018 conditions of service were not applied to them. Therefore, the values to apply these adjustments to this cohort of staff insourced staff from 2016 to 2019 were requested: a) two-thirds medical aid 2018 value and b) the 2018 *ad hoc* adjustment of 1.5%.

The unions wanted to strategise on the various items, taking consideration of the associated costs. Some issues are believed to be rights but it is also necessary to weigh up the prospects of success in the short term depending on how best to address these. Not all of the information has yet been received.

The last report to members was about the meeting held a few weeks ago, where it was agreed to commence with the negotiation process on 1 February. No meeting was then set down for the agreed date and when the unions nagged, it was set down but only for an hour. At this meeting all management wanted to address was the number of reps from each union and the chair (the unions had previously proposed a chair). Eventually a meeting notice was received today for the first negotiation meeting to be held on 3 March.

CONTINUOUSLY CHANGING ACADEMIC ISSUES

UKSU has written previous messages about interactions with management regarding the continuously changing academic requirements, including changes to result inputs, then instructions to change these, followed by instructions to reverse the changes - being a couple of examples and more recently further changes about assessments. The most recent response was on Thursday promising an update the next day – to date nothing has been received.

RETURN TO CAMPUS

This is another issue the collective unions are engaging management on. In the current national level, staff should continue to work from home where this is possible, with staff >60 years of age and any staff with comorbidities not returning to work at their physical place of work but to continue to

work remotely where possible. Such arrangements are also dependent on the nature of the work and the requirement for a physical presence in certain areas.

The concern of unions is that there does not seem to be central decision making but rather there an *ad hoc* approach, with different arrangements implemented across the colleges and even at school level within the same college. This has also been addressed with Professor Moshabela and the ED: HR at the end of last week. Professor Moshabela responded promptly advising that he will deal with the issues under his purview.

The current situation is that your line manager is considered best placed to decide on the operational need but remember the default position should not necessarily be return to campus, unless of course considered essential services. If you are required to return, then report any issues of concern immediately, such as cleaning, provision of soap, paper towels and sanitiser, demarcation of distancing, rotation of working hours, etc.

RECOGNITION AGREEMENT (RA) REVIEW

Members should recall messages during the course of 2020, reporting on the settlement agreement UKSU had secured with management in January 2020. This was to review the 2009 RA together with NEWHAWU, NTEU, UKSU as the remaining signatories. Management then failed to keep to the terms of the agreement. UKSU then submitted a further dispute, where during conciliation in October, the commissioner offered to facilitate a bargaining process. This process is also very slow with management not being pro-active. The meeting last Monday evening eventually saw an offer from them on the various rights and a further meeting is scheduled for this evening (Monday 22 February).

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Management will not budge on the proposal made by UKSU to abandon this requirement and where outcomes are required for any process, e.g. promotion, to then obtain a relevant report.

Members should be aware that participation in PM is an obligation on all staff as defined in the conditions of service. For both 2020 and 2021 the KPAs should reflect the situation and be flexible enough to address the relevant changes. You can still change the 2020 KPAs to match what was done, as flexibility is a given and approved. Certainly when setting up for 2021, make your KPAs role / task relevant and too the measures. As advice, try to fit the current reality into the KPAs from the job profile and adjust the measures to reflect the current situation but if this is not possible then an entire revision of the KPAs is acceptable.

VC's INVESTIGATION

On the evening of the UKSU strike on 17 February 2020, the UKSU Executive met with the Vice Chancellor about the grievances that led to the strike action. One was that the ED: HR was not rational in how he had given recognition rights to different unions, nor in the basis for cancelling the rights of some. Examples were: given recognition at 7.5% to one party, whilst others required 20% and cancelled some at the same level of granting rights to others. Despite having purported to derecognise some unions, the union was still engaged in negotiations – all rather a mess. This had emerged in the absence of the ED: HR in late 2019. Shortly after this the VC produced a draft ToR for UKSU to comment on, which was done. Then COVID happened and things were a bit *topsy turvy*. The unions were all interviewed by the investigator in December 2020, UKSU also provided a written dossier with supporting evidence. The VC later decided the investigation report was for his eyes only and we await feedback but more importantly whether the VC will see the outcome as the evidence

he has always claimed is necessary to address our multitude of complaints – UKSU told him back in September 2018 where the weakest links were.

The external attorney was to conduct an inquisitorial investigation into: a) recognition, organisational and collective bargaining rights from 2009 and the appropriateness of those; b) the inter-union relationships; c) the relationship between organised labour and management; and to offer recommendations for such structures.

The deadline for the report was the end of January. We await any outcomes arising from this investigation.

Regards and stay safe

UKSU Executive