

ICUCU Newsletter No 5

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Welcome to the latest newsletter for Imperial College UCU members.

Introducing your Branch Committee

Ruth Herd



Ruth joined Imperial as a teacher of Japanese in 1998. Her present role is that of Coordinator of Mandarin Chinese in the Centre for Languages, Culture and Communication. Most of her twenties and early thirties were spent in Japan and China. She was a student at Beijing Normal University from 1988 to 1989 and witnessed the student protests in Tiananmen Square. As well as teaching the Chinese language, Ruth also carries out academic research in the field of modern East Asian drama. Her role in Imperial UCU is that of Honorary Secretary. She has some years' experience of casework and is also part of a team that represents members on the Academic & Related Staff Joint Staff Committee and the Health and Safety Consultative Committee.

UCU Campaign Update - Local issues

EU Staff Members and "Brexit"

The results of the 23rd June referendum have created widespread uncertainty for EU staff and students and others at Imperial, including concerns over future changes in residency status, new visa requirements and EU funding eg Horizon 2020. UCU is campaigning on behalf of EU and international staff, so if you know any colleagues who are not members please encourage them to join. You could also raise your concerns with your local MP. A model letter is available at:

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8418/Brexit> -

[and-post-school-education-guide-Dec16/pdf/ucu_brexitbriefing_dec16 .pdf](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/and-post-school-education-guide-Dec16/pdf/ucu_brexitbriefing_dec16.pdf)

We welcome the statements that the President has made re-affirming Imperial's commitments to EU staff and students. However we are not clear what specific steps the College has taken to lobby the Government about protecting the status of current EU members of staff, either on its own or in conjunction with other universities. Given the widespread evidence that the government has not yet developed a strategy on "Brexit", continued pressure from universities stressing their huge importance to the future of the country is vital at this stage. We have asked the College management to agree to a joint open letter to the prime minister from Imperial's management, trade unions and the student union to help maintain this pressure. This has already done by some other universities:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/staff/staffnews/August/24082016-Provost-and-unionrepresentatives-press-government-EUcitizens-status>

TEF and the Higher Education and Research Bill

UCU believe that the government's Teaching Excellence Framework is intrinsically flawed and would be an unnecessary and unhelpful distraction for those involved in higher education. There have been reports that several universities are considering opting out of TEF, eg:

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/some-russell-group-universities-could-opt-out-tef>

The Higher Education and Research Bill proposes to introduce radical changes, including the abolition of the current research

councils and mechanisms for funding of research at UK universities. Many concerns about these proposals have been expressed, including the likelihood that they “*will upend globally accepted norms that protect independence and self-determination in science and higher education (Nature 6th October 2016)*”:

<http://www.nature.com/news/oppose-the-uk-higher-education-and-research-bill-1.20726>

We have asked Imperial management if they are considering an opt-out from TEF, which we would strongly encourage and if they have made any representations to the government over the Higher Education Bill. However, we are still awaiting a reply to both of these questions.

Recording of lectures and other teaching sessions

UCU first raised its concerns about the lack of a clear policy on the use of Panopto at the Joint Committee in June 2014. The Management response was that there was no need for a detailed policy and that, in any case, staff were under no obligation to participate. However at the start of this academic year, as in previous ones, we have been contacted by members of staff, who have come under pressure from students and some of their peers, into agreeing to be recorded. We have also heard from many members of staff who reluctantly agreed to being recorded after being informed just before their lectures that this was what was “expected” of them.

In addition, by far the majority of those who have been in contact with UCU were unaware of the guidance on the use of Panopto, nor had they received any training or been made aware of the possible uses of their recorded material beyond the course that they were teaching on. We believe that this remains a serious and unresolved issue and re-iterate our request for negotiations between Management and UCU with a view to reaching an agreed policy.

Future of Campuses

In the light of the developments at White City and enquiries from our members, UCU would like information on the future of the various campuses at Imperial ie South Kensington, St Mary’s, Hammersmith, Charing Cross and other

Faculty of Medicine Sites, Silwood Park and Wye. We would like to know what, if any, plans there are for the College to divest part or all of any of these campuses or any planned developments at them. We would also like further information about which staff groups (Faculties/Departments etc.) will/might be affected by the developments at White City and any changes to the other campuses.

We had hoped to give you the responses from management to this and the other issues in this newsletter which we had raised with them at the beginning of November. However, we are still awaiting replies.

UCU Services to members

Continuing Professional Development

UCU believes that effective CPD is essential and benefits both staff and students in the sector. They offer a range of personal and professional development resources that will provide practical help throughout the course of your career. There is material from a variety of education specialists to help you develop excellence and confidence in teaching, learning and professional practice.

For more information go to:

<http://cpd.web.ucu.org.uk/2013/06/17/ucu-helping-you-in-your-career/>

It could happen to you!

Don’t wait till it’s too late - join UCU now



Every week Imperial’s UCU office receives at least one enquiry from a member of staff seeking union advice for a problem with their employment.

Unfortunately, in many cases they are not a UCU member so we are unable to help them. If you or your colleagues are not yet members please consider joining - you never know when you might need us. Go to:

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/join>

Dates for your 2017 Diary

-  Sat 4 February - TUC Stand up to Racism Conference
 - Sat 18 March - National REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS WELCOME HERE demo for UN anti-racism day (supported by the TUC)
- For more information go to:
<http://www.standuptoracism.org.uk/>