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22nd February 2016

Mandy Eddolls
Executive Director of OD & HR

Dear Mandy

Thank you for your letter dated 15 February 2016. UCU is also disappointed with the way the meeting went on 11 February. We were hoping that you would receive our comments on your proposed revisions to the South Bank Agreement.

The 'London South Bank Agreement' (LSBA) has provided a contractual framework for academic staff for the last sixteen years. This is a structure which has been tried and tested. Whilst members are generally supportive of this framework, a number of problems have been highlighted over the years which need resolving.

UCU is therefore prepared to negotiate a new revised agreement provided there are improvements in the contract which benefit staff in terms of their health and safety, the quality of educational provision and work-life balance.

UCU is resolutely opposed to any changes that bring deterioration in our members working conditions.

UCU has engaged in negotiations over the Academic Framework (AF) for Grade 7 (L) and Grade 8 (SL). We are opposed to the new proposed lower paid Grade 6 because members see it as a potential threat to their pay and conditions.

You say the Academic Framework (AF) "sits alongside, and is completely consistent with, the academic contract". Sitting alongside the academic contract, or going together with it, is exactly our point. They impinge on each other. This is why UCU insists that we cannot agree to one part of the package until we see the package as a whole.

This is why we reject your assertion that the Academic Framework (AF) "is completely consistent with, the academic contract" (i.e. LSBA). This is incorrect because we do not know the outcome of the negotiations over the contract and so cannot say it is "completely consistent". Nevertheless UCU welcomes your statement as recognition that the AF and the LSBA are interconnected. This is a step forward.

You say that LSBU has "closed the consultation with UCU and launched the framework" (AF – grades 7 and 8). UCU considers this an attempt to bypass negotiations on the contract (LSBA) by imposing the AF prematurely. This is not acceptable. This is a diversion and a distraction from the negotiations. If you try to circumvent negotiations on the contract by means of imposition then our priority must be defending members against management diktat.



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UCU needs to make clear the following points:

1. UCU has rejected grade 6 and has 'parked' agreement on 7 & 8 pending completion of negotiations on the LSBA.
2. If there is no satisfactory outcome of the LSBA negotiations we would want to revisit the Academic Framework. If on the other hand we secure agreement on LSBA we would want to discuss the final package to ensure there is the 'complete consistency' which you highlighted in your letter (19 February 2016)
3. Any introduction of grade 6 will be met by seeking approval from members and UCU nationally for industrial action and breaking off further negotiations
4. UCU will not end or break off negotiations simply because management has threateningly "launched the framework" (AF – grades 7 and 8). However our priority will be persuading members not to recognise or refer to the AF or take any account of it whatsoever in any dealings with management.
5. Conflict between UCU and management over your attempt to impose the AF has two disadvantages. First the conflict will be a distraction and divert our attention from concentrating on agreeing a new LSBA. Second any 'goodwill' on grades 7 and grade 8 may be lost and it may not be regained.

Yours sincerely

Russell Caplan
LSBU UCU Branch Secretary