

Professor Karen Stanton
Vice-Chancellor
Solent University
East Park Terrace
Southampton
SO14 0YN

25 November 2020

Declaration of trade dispute – Restructure and Redundancies at Solent University

Dear Professor Stanton,

I am writing to you as the UCU Regional Official responsible for our members at Solent University to declare a formal trade dispute between UCU and Solent University.

UCU was notified of potential redundancies at the JNCC (Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee) on Thursday, 22 October 2020. UCU received a formal notification of a collective redundancy consultation starting on 2 November 2020 and due to continue until at least 16 December 2020. The University identified the objective of identifying establishment pay savings of £10.5m for 2021-22 by 31 July 2021. This would be realised through further rationalisation of the course portfolio, organisational change to create the new Faculty structures and a new operating model for professional services. In the current redundancy consultation 219 posts are at risk, with the University intending at the commencement of the consultation to cut 109 roles by reason of redundancy.

UCU has engaged with Solent University in the consultation process about these potential redundancy dismissals. We acknowledge that Solent University has met several times with UCU in this consultation process, however we remain dissatisfied about the disclosure of information to UCU and the lack of transparency in the proposals, as well as the plans to dismiss UCU members on the grounds of redundancy. I acknowledge that progress has been made in the disclosure of information to UCU in the last week, however UCU maintains that for the consultation to be meaningful, all of this information should have been available from the beginning of the formal redundancy consultation.

The grounds of this trade dispute are the proposed redundancies, the failure of Solent University to disclose information and meaningfully consult with UCU, and the failure of Solent University to remove the threat of compulsory redundancy as part of those proposals.

In order to resolve this trade dispute UCU requires:

- a written commitment from Solent University senior management that there will be no compulsory redundancies as part of the current proposals;
- disclosure to UCU of all information required, including financial information, for meaningful collective consultations with the aim of avoiding and mitigating

- against redundancy
- meaningful undertakings from Solent University that it will continue to fully comply with collective agreements reached with UCU, including on Academic Career Pathways, Academic Workload Planning and the local Framework Agreement
- a joint review of policies and procedures of Solent University, to minimise future redundancies in the University;
- a firm undertaking from University senior management to engage in such collective consultations in good faith.

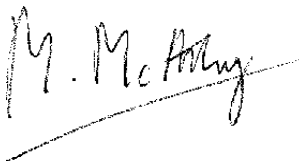
UCU reserves its right to now progress this matter but the University is now aware of the action needed to resolve this issue and we remain open to meaningful negotiations. We would be potentially open to an early referral to ACAS for collective conciliation, if this would enable us to reach agreement to resolve the concerns of UCU members.

This dispute will continue until such time as all the above issues, and any issues related to any industrial action called for by the union in support of the dispute, have been resolved to UCU's satisfaction. UCU will be undertaking a further consultation among our members about escalation of this trade dispute, including potentially calling a statutory ballot for strike action and action short of strike action. Any potential resolution to these matters of dispute must be endorsed by our members at Solent University.

I hope that we can engage in genuine negotiation to resolve the dispute and remove the potential need for further UCU action. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely



Moray McAulay
Regional Official
UCU Southern Region

CC: Professor Julie Hall, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, Solent University
Andrea Thompson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Resources, Solent University
Mark Farwell, Chair, Solent UCU
Ann Jones, Chair, Unison Southampton District
Neil Duncan-Jordan, Regional Organiser, Unison