

Newsletter

7th September 2016



We recently asked management if we could see the business case for the Core System Modernisation CSM programme. We were told that management were not yet ready to show it to us. All colleagues who have spoken to us about the programme understand that it could mean that we will lose more colleagues through restructures once CSM settles in.

Once a year, UNISON and the academics' union UCU meet with executive management that usually includes the Vice Chancellor. Management presented the university's strategic plan that was drawn up after consultation with staff and the unions. The vision looks to make DMU the best locally, nationally and internationally. Professional Services are key to that. It was recognised years ago that support staff are as important in delivering the student experience, and research, as our academics. A synergism. At the meeting, we presented a paper about automation and artificial intelligence. In a short time we are going to start to recognise the acceleration in the pace of technological change. We need to understand this and prepare ourselves, academics and students to work side by side with automation. Automation has the potential to radically change how we work and what we teach and research. It has been said that the key is to concentrate on the more social portion of work. In order to create sustainable incomes for everyone we need to understand this. The paper was well received. The point was put forward that it was recognised that colleagues in Professional Services spend lots of time face to face with students. This is a different situation to most other types of enterprise. It was recognised that automation was coming and that that would give us the opportunity to develop the student

experience. This is a positive, as opposed to finding "efficiencies", type of challenge for executive management, Human Resources, and Occupational Development. If the university concentrates on automation and lean processes it will become indiscernible from other universities not seeking some distinction.

Industrial relations, getting down to basics, describes this tug of war - developing teams and keeping them happy against the competitive need to running the university as cheaply as possible. On the progressive side of things the university can train us, make sure there are enough people to do the work, keep the work interesting, value our family lives or our work life balance in relation to things like requests for leave (schools have regular holidays and the sun comes out in summer!) or make it possible to use up TOIL. And to stand up for staff when the need arises. When the university gets it right good will increases and that leads, essentially, to staff doing more work with out the expectation of more reward.

Away from the university being a good employer with a vision we have the contract and pay. This is the reason for this particular newsletter. Everyone should be aware that we, Professional Services and academic staff, are taking part in a national dispute over the cost of living pay rise. Attached to this newsletter is another written by UNISON at national level. As a whole, universities are richer than ever before. Executive pay has rocketed. We were told earlier in the year this years surplus, at DMU, will be nearly double last years. We have to bear in mind that Brexit and the Teaching Excellence Framework may change our trajectory but

we have the impression from management that we are doing well and that they would not mind an increase greater than the current offer of 1.1%. Without putting words in any one's mouth we feel it is time to address the imbalance and reward staff for working so hard since the 2008 financial crash.

If DMU's executive management feel the same way as we do, because the negotiations are done at national level, there is little they can do to improve the offer. The way the negotiations work, we have been told, is that if one university claims to be poor and that they can't afford a proper pay rise the offer will not improve. Other representatives at the negotiations could put pressure on that one university but only if we give them a reason. This is why we are looking, again, at strike action. A national strike might give the reason representatives need to argue in their university's interest for a better pay rise.

We are working with the university to improve the finances of staff. Outside of pay, there are not many levers but we have recently consulted on pay progression, DMU Rewards and have touched briefly on training related to personal finances. UNISON has its own rewards programme which you can look at here: <http://www.unisonrewards.com/> and a welfare programme where you can seek advice from us or in some circumstances organise financial aid.

Secretary

Let's put an end to inequality

Website: <http://myunion.life/>
Email: unison@dmu.ac.uk
Join : <https://www.unison.org.uk/join/>

Tell your friends to join a union:

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/join-union>

Newsletter Call to Action

1. Consider the ballot for strike action. It is a national discussion, not just a DMU one.
2. It is ADR season. Think about what is social or what adds to the student experience in your work and seek recognition for it or to increase that work. Beyond that talk to colleagues about these aspects.

Look out for "future of work" or "4th Industrial Revolution".

Web Distractions

<http://c3iq.eu/2ue> Boston Dynamics' New Robots

<http://c3iq.eu/2uf> IBM's Watson on BBC's Click

<http://c3iq.eu/2uh> Stephen Kinnock MP on the 4th Industrial Revolution

