

UCU response to the JEP report and plans for next phase of USS negotiations

Dear colleague

I am emailing branch officers with an update about the second report of the Joint Expert Panel (JEP) and the next phase of negotiations in the USS dispute, and some advice on how to engage with your employers about the underlying issues in the next few weeks.

For my initial commentary on the report, issued to members last week, [click here](#). For the associated UCU press release, [click here](#).

The national dispute committee has released a detailed and broadly positive [statement about the panel's findings](#) and you may find it particularly useful for updating your members and lobbying your senior management to press the panel's claims. Employers will be feeding in to a Universities UK consultation on the panel in the New Year so it is essential that you get in touch as soon as possible and press them on the implementation of the Panel's conclusions.

The superannuation working group (SWG) including UCU's elected USS negotiators has released [a brief statement](#) welcoming the panel's report and endorsing the panel's proposal to facilitate a process of talks between stakeholders and involving USS and The Pensions Regulator, as a means to find a viable agreement between all parties.

My next step as GS will be to liaise with the panel, UUK, and USS in order to establish a programme of talks that will begin in the New Year and aim to have as much bearing as possible on the forthcoming 2020 valuation, which is being brought forward with a relatively tight timetable.

The elected reps on UCU's higher education committee (HEC) will meet on 30 January and discuss the USS dispute. They will consider scheduling further action in line with the resolution passed by the USS special higher education sector conference earlier this month, to hold [14 further days of action in respect of the USS dispute](#). When that HEC meeting happens, we will have the results of the current ballots in branches that did not meet the 50% turnout threshold and we will also have a better idea of the extent to which employers and USS are cooperating with us on the implementation of the JEP's proposals.

However, in order to resolve this dispute properly we also need employers to cover the contribution increases associated with the 2018 valuation. As I outlined in [my last email to members](#), winning material concessions from employers is the best way to ensure that they work hard to change the way USS operates. Otherwise, it will be difficult to trust employers to commit to achieving the necessary reforms. It is very important that you underline this point when you meet your senior managers over the coming weeks.

Jo Grady
UCU general secretary