

SUCU Emergency General Meeting Minutes 8th May 2025, 10am - 11am

Online, with some rooms booked in the SU - [meeting info](#)

Chair: Robyn Orfitelli (RO), Minutes: Rosie Strathearn-Brady (RSB), David Hayes (DH)

This was a one-issue meeting to update the branch on negotiations and the offer from management, and to facilitate a discussion.

1. Update from negotiators

Negotiators provided the following updates:

- The strike action has gone really well, this is the first time VC has been in the negotiating room since 2023. We're really proud of our branch.
- We presented our position of demanding that all compulsory redundancies be called off in yesterday's meeting. Management declined, but returned with [an offer](#).
- This offer includes:
 - Management have confirmed that between now and September they will not launch any change management processes other than IT Services (launching at the start of September), and language teachers within the School of East Asian Studies.
 - For areas which are currently being restructured and the two due to start, compulsory redundancy notices would be issued with an extension to the end of December. This has more benefit for those currently facing an earlier date for redundancy.
 - Management have committed to running VSS for all restructures between now and July 2026, which will be on the same terms as the late 2024 offer.
 - We would have to call off all strike action from Friday, and all ASOS until September under our current ballot. This doesn't preclude us from rebalotting in the Summer, but we wouldn't be able to take industrial action on our current mandate.
 - Should we agree to reschedule teaching and certain other time sensitive work activities, management will forgo taking strike deductions. We expressed to management that it is not likely to be practicable to reschedule all teaching contact hours in a precisely like-for-like fashion; for example not all sessions may be in person, it may be necessary to combine seminar groups. We stated that should members accept this, it would be with the expectation of support from line managers and an understanding that staff would do their best, but that university management would need to show flexibility.
- Negotiators discussed the offer for a long time, and decided it was enough of an improved offer to bring it to the branch with a neutral view (neither an enforcement nor an explicit suggestion to reject). It does not guarantee there will not be any compulsory redundancies, it just kicks the can down the road, but it also provides

more time to support the staff who are at risk to find employment and alternate proposals.

- We were very clear with management that whether members vote to accept the offer regarding compulsory redundancies is entirely separate from the decision of whether members vote to agree to reschedule certain activities including missed teaching.
- Members should know that during this meeting, management also informed us that they do intend to pursue further reviews and restructures next academic year. These will involve a subset of the academic schools which were the focus of targeted VS last year, with intended savings in the academic staffing budget of at least several million pounds. These will occur in two phases. We do not welcome this news, although it did not come as a surprise based on previous management announcements.

2. Member discussion

Members discussed issues around:

- Leverage
- Remaining risk of job loss for the staff in scope currently
- The strong action taken so far.
- The possibility of balloting ahead of/early in next academic year
- Upcoming reviews and possible restructures
- Messaging from management..

Two members called a point of order challenge. They proposed that the poll should be viewed as non-binding and that a vote on how to proceed should be called in the meeting, stating that there was confusion over the poll. They felt that polls of this nature are not in keeping with the branch's commitment to participatory democracy, and that the poll should not have been opened before the meeting.

RO advised that she was making a Chair's decision, in line with branch rules, not to take a vote in the meeting as the meeting was over-time, many people had left, and in order to respect the outcome of the poll. She acknowledged that there was a mistake in wording on the poll that suggested that the dispute would also be called off should members call off strike action, and apologised for that. She advised that in response to concerns, if there was a 'yes' vote on accepting the offer then the branch would call off industrial action, but would not call off the dispute.