LUCU Members Newsletter 13 November 2025

Dear Members

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1. Strike Action on Thursday 27 November and Friday 28 November 2025

We served notice to the University interim senior management team this morning of our strike action on Thursday 27 November and Friday 28 November 2025. We have made it clear to them that this is their last chance to avoid strikes by withdrawing CRs, or risk escalating and sustained industrial action (see attached email titled 'UCU strike action…').

2. Action Short of Strike (ASOS)

ASOS began on **Monday 10 November**. We have circulated guidance for academic and PS staff, FAQs, and student leaflets. Let's make sure that ASOS is as impactful as it can be – this is our chance to put pressure on and make it absolutely clear to interim senior management that the University cannot function without our goodwill. If you have any ASOS questions, please join any drop-in session below or contact your department rep or a committee member.

To join **in person**:

1. Thursday 20 Nov, 3pm, LUMS B22 (Meeting room) B221, Management School, Lancaster University campus - MazeMap
2. Tuesday 25 Nov, 5pm, Physics A27 (Meeting room) A027, Physics, Lancaster University campus - MazeMap

Online link for both: Zoom meeting

We also have lots of other activities going on, and different groups of LUCU volunteers are working to make the things below happen – please contact Nils if you are able to help and would like to join any of these groups –

1. Banners and placards
2. Leaflets
3. Teach-outs
4. Social/Asos
5. Crafting
6. Pickets
7. Social media
8. Fundraising

Thanks to those who joined us for the film **PRIDE** on Tuesday 11 November – and thanks to Nils and Joanne for organising!

3. **Staff Health and Wellbeing Crisis**

LUCU has grave concerns about worsening staff health and wellbeing due to the FHASS Envision move (please see attached email and press release sent on Monday 11 November). We have notified the regulator Health and Safety Executive (HSE) urging them to investigate. We have asked University management for a full restructuring of the University's Health & Safety function, strengthening its independence and oversight over all H&S matters, and a formal written acknowledgement from management that future relocations will involve consultation with campus trade unions. In order to rebuild trust between staff and FHASS management, and for staff to begin the process of healing and restoring themselves from the trauma, **LUCU has also urged the Executive Dean of FHASS to consider stepping down from his role with immediate effect.** Overall, staff absence across the University related to stress is through the roof. There seems to be no concrete strategy from interim senior management to deal with this unfolding crisis. **We will continue to fight for a safe, fair, and respectful workplace for all staff.**

4. **Update from LU Futures Collective Consultation (24 Oct)**

We have pushed back on the senior managers' refusal to provide us with full information and have asked them to be transparent and honest with us. We made it clear that it is UCU's reasonable expectation, in terms of us being the legitimate voice of the staff, that we are an equal partner in the consultation process. Senior management should be willing to share whatever information we think is necessary and relevant, regardless of whether they think it is irrelevant. Our recent request for information concerning the India campus project illustrates this point. As members will see from the list below, there are several issues on which we need more clarity. We have asked the interim senior leadership to arrange another extraordinary collective consultation meeting with UCU to answer our questions. Some of the issues are, in no particular order of importance –

1. Rationale for FHASS envision move
2. Attrition (why was it considered as zero in blueprint calculations when clearly this is material)
3. Clarity over the actual number of academic staff used for blueprint calculations (we have received two different figures, KPMG has used 1087 for its calculations while the University has 1525 academic staff on books)
4. How have LUCU proposals to avoid redundancies been considered
5. Curtailing non-pay expenditure, i.e. prioritisation of Ruskin (more on this below), Return on Investment (RoI) on International Partnerships (£11m expenditure), RoI on LU Online (zero, yes, 0 students), transparency around India campus plans, Digital strategy (£12m earmarked spend), UA92 (£6m loss) etc.
6. Why PS design is not following academic shape and size
7. Questions on settlement agreement clauses which are heavy handed and dissuading members from seeking union support

5. **Meeting with Incoming VC and RSCOO**

Branch president Sunil and vice-president Laura will meet the incoming VC Steve Decent and RSCOO Susan Mitchell in January. We've written to them expressing our disappointment at the lack of engagement from interim management and reiterating that there is ***no financial or strategic case* for compulsory redundancies (CRs).** We've urged them to withdraw CRs immediately and warned that further harm to staff over the festive period will force stronger strike action in Lent term. While UCU welcome them to the University, we stressed the urgent need to rebuild trust and end unnecessary distress.

6. KPMG and the LU Futures Delivery Board

We are deeply concerned that KPMG, which designed the workforce reduction blueprint, now sits on the delivery board overseeing its own implementation. We've requested full membership details and terms of reference of the LU Futures delivery board. This dual role by KPMG undermines objectivity and raises serious ethical and governance concerns. We have also asked interim senior management for a clear statement on reported mistreatment of LU staff by KPMG representatives. It has been 3 weeks since we asked, but we are yet to see a response.

7. Santander Revolving Credit Facility (RCF)

LU has a £60m loan facility with Santander (agreed 2023). We've asked for details of any conditions or covenants, including "academic" and "social" impact targets, and clarification on whether the facility has been drawn and repaid within the year (thus not appearing in accounts). The key question for UCU is that given management's claims of strong liquidity ('envy' of UK universities), the necessity of agreeing this facility is unclear, because we believe it imposes certain targets on the University irrespective of whether it is used or not.

8. Will the 'museum of the near future' ever arrive?

That question has been on our mind while reading about the University's plan to spend further millions on maintaining The Ruskin Building (formerly the Ruskin Library). For many years, though, it has been little visited, a situation that long predates its current closure for renovation. University management has said that an expenditure of £7.5 million is required to meet its 'obligations to funders to house the collection in premises which befit its status as one of national significance.' To date, though, no public documentation has been provided to substantiate this claim. In any case, the funders' expectations extend beyond the preservation of the collection. They also require that the collection be used for research, education and public engagement. So, what has The Ruskin actually been doing all these years? How has it justified its continuing (and, it seems, increasing) cost? The Ruskin was relaunched in 2019 as 'The Ruskin: Museum of the Near Future', a title that – after several years of closure – now feels ironic. Will the 'museum of the near future' ever arrive? Substantial resources have been devoted to it, yet visible outcomes are minimal. The last recorded activity on The Ruskin's website dates from three years ago. What, if anything, has been happening since? In the current climate, the lack of any recent public account of The Ruskin's activities is troubling. Whether required by contract or driven by institutional choice, the decision to invest further millions in a building few people use, and which delivers little apparent benefit to the University, remains deeply questionable. We have written to the funders of the Ruskin Library expressing our concerns about the timing of the refurbishment of the Ruskin Library costing £7.5 million amidst financial pressures claimed by senior management. **We have also seen an email from the interim VC sent to a funder expressing management's commitment to Ruskin, which makes a mockery of the consultation process - key commitments are being made on expenditure even as we are trying to find ways to mitigate against CRs.**

9. Support from L&M TUC

Branch president Sunil attended the Lancaster and Morecambe Trades Union Council (LMTUC) general meeting last night, which unanimously resolved to –

1. Send a letter of solidarity to LUCU in support of our upcoming strikes

2. Support our picket lines with TUC banners and to invite TUC member unions to support our pickets (Unite, MU, NEU, NUJ, RMT)

3. Provide hardship support by ringfencing part of their strike fund for UCU

4. Organise a fundraising event in support of UCU

We are very grateful to LMTUC for their continuing solidarity and support over the last few years.

10. Support from Lancaster Labour group

We have received a great statement of support from the Lancaster Labour group – please see attached.

11. Government Petition Response

The Government has acknowledged our petition on redundancies and their effect on educational quality. The formal response is attached for members' reference.

12. Inflation-Linked Tuition Fees

We have asked management to provide us with updated budgets and forecasts following the announcement on tuition fees increases in line with inflation in the recent Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper. We will let you know the overall impact when we receive more information, but just based on our conservative estimates, **the increase in tuition fees should add roughly £4m to the bottomline**, and this will rise each year.

13. **Workload Adjustment for VR Staff**

We've asked HR to confirm that work-overloads for those taking Voluntary Redundancy will be adjusted based on a 31 July end date—or compensated if not adjusted. Workloads are typically annual (Oct–Sept), so fairness and clarity are essential. Updates will follow once HR responds.

14. **Social Media**

Our social media accounts are all set up and ready to go – see links below. **Please follow us and start posting.**

15. **Hardship donations**

The donation page is up and running. Here is the link: https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/lancaster-ucu-hardship-fund and QR code -

Please circulate to friends, colleagues in your department who may not be members but would like to support UCU, colleagues in other universities, neighbours, every little helps and will be very much appreciated!

16. **Reflections**

Many of us would have been served notice for compulsory redundancies on 5th September as per senior managers original plans had LUCU had not pushed back robustly. We were being pushed by senior management to engage with their proposals for selection criteria for compulsory redundancies, but by standing firm and having courage in our convictions we were able to demonstrate with robust evidence that no case exists for CRs.

We would not have had a VS scheme for PS staff had LUCU not pushed back at the inherent inequity in senior managers proposals.

We would not have had a 1.75 multiple for statutory redundancy pay VS, a 1.5 multiple for VR, or statutory caps on length of service and weekly pay removed, had not LUCU challenged senior managers on their wishful thinking of getting rid of as many of us as possible at the lowest possible cost.

We have exposed management's hypocrisy and callousness towards their staff and students to the HSE, OfS, to the local and national politicians and ministers.

We are following up with various financial regulators on the UPP-KPMG conflicts of interest.

We have not only shown them that we will not take their unjust and unethical proposals lying down, but we have completely demolished their credibility.

We have shown them that we are not numbers on a spreadsheet to be pushed around and dehumanised by referring to us as 'Stock' (when they use the term 'stocktake').

We won USS. Together, we will win this fight too. Stay strong, and don't ever give up.