

COLLECTIVE REDUNDANCIES — BALLOT INFORMATION

**LCC first, Camberwell second,
LCF third...who's next?**

✓ VOTE YES FOR STRIKE ACTION

You are being asked to vote to support industrial action in defence of jobs at the University of the Arts. This follows numerous attempts by your union to resolve the issues at dispute. With regret, the UAL UCU Co-ordinating Committee, your Branch Secretaries and the UCU General Secretary all recommend that you **Vote YES** to support industrial action in defence of jobs.

What is the dispute about?

On 20 April 2009, the Rector announced, without any consultation with the trade unions, a phased 'Efficiency Programme' (cuts) of £7 million over two years. Despite his statement that 'compulsory redundancies will always be a last resort' this programme has already meant the loss of around 100 academic jobs. UCU has been notified of more to come. The procedure employed and the lack of meaningful consultation with staff or students has made the exercise as destructive as it is unnecessary. The first 'reviews' have set damaging precedents, harming staff and student morale.

Far from acting to minimise the numbers of jobs lost and avoid compulsory redundancies, management appear to be pushing the number of compulsory redundancies still higher and minimising opportunities for redeployment of staff whose jobs are threatened. At the same time, management have refused to negotiate a redundancy procedure and have used its absence to impose unfavourable redundancy terms on academic staff. This means members have been made compulsorily redundant with only the minimum statutory compensation.

Yet the cuts are not even urgent. Recent years have seen the university in robust financial health. The last Financial Statement showed a surplus of £5.7 million and net assets of £136.9 million for the year ending 31 July 2009. Despite these facts and the record numbers of students enrolling, the university refuses to rule out more compulsory redundancies.

What impact are the cuts having?

Taken together the 'Efficiency Programme' means job losses on a scale unprecedented in the history of the University of the Arts or the Arts HE sector as a whole. The impact on staff and students is substantial:

- unemployment for hundreds of colleagues at a time when the job market is totally stagnant
- an even higher student/staff ratio leading to larger classes and less contact time for students
- a significantly higher teaching and administrative workload for those who remain in post
- threats to increase the length of terms and number of teaching weeks
- reduced academic choice at UAL, undermining our reputation as a world class arts university
- closure of the university crèche by the end of this academic year
- management by diktat that will, if left unchallenged, form a serious attack on academic freedom and collegiality—we are in danger of losing both of these precious aspects of university life at UAL.

DISPUTE WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

What does UCU want?

UCU has tried consistently to ensure that management follow their own procedures and comply with statutory provisions. However:

- the Rector has opposed our proposals to the Board of Governors for an open, university-wide forum of staff and students to assess the likely academic impact of course closures and redundancies
- staff have been called to meetings without being told of their right to union representation
- staff have been asked to individual consultation meetings after—not before—receiving formal notice of redundancy
- appropriate Equality Impact Assessments - a legal requirement—have not been carried out
- the University has sought high court injunctions at considerable expense to ban student protests and has employed security to suppress dissent.

UCU's demands on behalf of our members are simple and reasonable. We are seeking:

1. Withdrawal of compulsory redundancy notices.
2. A review of course closures to date and an agreed protocol for future course reviews.
3. A properly negotiated and fair redundancy agreement with no reduced terms.

Is a negotiated solution possible?

Time and time again UAL UCU has attempted to engage seriously with the university to reach a negotiated solution only to be met with reluctance to compromise on the latter's part. Our priority is to defend education and protect members' jobs without having to take industrial action. However, the University's unwillingness to defer the compulsory redundancy programme and halt further unnecessary course closures while talks take place indicates that **we need your support now**. The stronger the vote for action we receive in this ballot, the stronger our negotiating position will be.

Won't industrial action hurt students?

This is a worrying time for students. We are pleased that the new President and Executive of the Students' Union support UCU's campaign to defend art and design education. They will be pressing the University to detail how management will maintain the student experience whilst cutting lecturers' jobs and courses. We will continue to explain the issues to students and work together to protect the interests of those who learn and work here. Therefore while the gravity of the situation means that we cannot avoid balloting you for both strike action and action short of a strike, we will give a commitment to students that as far as possible any industrial action by UCU will seek to minimise the impact upon them.

I support the union's position, is it important I vote?

Every vote cast in support of industrial action strengthens the union's negotiating position. Please do not leave it to others to defend jobs and the quality of education at UAL. Whatever your views, participate in this important ballot, the outcome of which will affect you and your colleagues for many years to come.

SUPPORT YOUR NEGOTIATORS DEFEND JOBS AND ART & DESIGN EDUCATION AT UAL VOTE YES TO STRIKE ACTION VOTE YES TO ACTION SHORT OF A STRIKE

Explanatory Note: forms of industrial action authorised by this ballot

If members vote to support the union's position, decisions on the timing and type of industrial action to be taken will be made by the UAL UCU Coordinating Committee, in consultation with UCU officials and following discussion at members' meetings.

If the vote is in favour of strike action, the union is authorised to ask you to take either continuous or discontinuous strike action.

If the vote is in favour of action short of a strike the union is authorised to ask you to take action which does not constitute strike action such as withdrawal from or non cooperation with Quality Assurance Processes, Staff Review and Development, Data collection, work meetings outside standard working hours and actions which disrupt the administration of the university.

If action short of a strike becomes necessary, the Committee's intention would be to ask a general meeting to consider its timing and duration.

Industrial action represents a breach of contract and the University may choose not to pay you on days when you have taken that action.