

Approved minute of the meeting of the National Joint Negotiating Committee – Side Table Lecturers held on Thursday 19 November at 11:00 hrs in Edinburgh College Milton Road Campus.

In Attendance

Charlie Montgomery	Staff Side(Chair)
Pam Currie	“ “
Jim O’Donovan	“ “
John Kelly	“ “
Donny Gluckstein (For Part of meeting)	“ “
Liz McIntyre	Management Side (Chair)
Susan Bald	“ “
Rob Wallen	“ “
Judy Keir	“ “
Ian McKay	“ “
David Belsey	Staff Side Secretary
John Gribben	Management Side Secretary

20/15 Welcome and apologies

Apologies were noted from Keith McKellar and Audrey Cumberland

21/15 Minutes

Following minor amendment, the minute was agreed.

22/15 Matters Arising

No matters arising

23/15 Response to Pay Offer

The Staff Side advised that the offer had been put before its Special Conference and it had been unanimously rejected. The EIS advised that it would now undertake an indicative ballot of its members on the pay offer, and that could lead to industrial action.

The Management Side sought clarity on the gap between both Sides to establish if there were any aspects where that gap could be reduced or closed, specifically what would harmonisation progress look like to the Staff Side.

The Staff Side, advised that its claim remained unaltered, that it consisted of two elements, and both those elements required to be addressed. In terms of a reasonable uplift and addressing the harmonisation aspect. The Staff Side explained that this position had been made clear in previous Side Table meetings.

The Staff Side considered that the current offer did nothing to address the pay differentials or inequality that exists within the sector, and indeed exacerbated them.

The Management Side stated that 2015/16 should be considered as a transitional year. The flat rate increase requested would do little to reduce pay differentials, the offer made was in line with public sector pay policy, and was within existing resources.

Adjournment

In recognising the Staff Side position, the Management Side agreed to amend its offer to reflect £300 or 1% whichever is the greater. In addition, to address the Staff Side aspirations of harmonisation the Management Side confirmed it was willing to commit to a timescale, however cognisance needed to be given to that timescale being realistic, and securing the funding that will ultimately be required from the Scottish Government to deliver on that timescale.

The Staff Side acknowledged that a date would be helpful, but clarity would be required if that was an implementation date or a conclusion date, which of course would be dependent on a implementation being completed in one step (a big bang) or incrementally.

Management Side confirmed that there is a common aspiration to addressing the differentials and achieving standardisation on conditions of service (including pay), but reminded the Staff Side that industry experience of addressing such large scale exercises came with Government support and identified funding streams.

The Staff Side welcomed the joint aspiration, however a date was required.

Adjournment

Management Side confirmed that it was prepared to commit to, and proposed a statement that *“Through the workforce discussion at the NJNC, we jointly commit to achieving standardised terms and conditions across the sector by 2018/19.”*

Staff Side welcomed this movement but reminded the NJNC the current financial offer falls well short of 3.3% claim, excluding harmonisation. The Management Side explained that the workforce for the future would consider all aspects of standardisation, including finance.

Adjournment

The Staff Side welcomed the commitment, and were encouraged by the progress to commit to standardisation by 2018/19 but believed this was not firm enough, Staff Side were seeking agreement for the “harmonisation” to be complete by 2017/18 and signed as a formal agreement, it proposed the following amended statement:

“Through the workforce discussion at the NJNC, we jointly agree to complete standardised terms and conditions across the sector in 2018.”

Staff Side reiterated the position that the pay uplift was not enough, the timescale too long, and that a commitment on the harmonisation of pay was required.

Management Side advised that it is committed to standardisation and equalisation, but collective leverage will be required as Government were an integral part of the process due to funding being an essential element to deliver.

Adjournment

Management Side explained that identifying a suitable form of words that gave both Sides an agreeable route forward was important, Management Side set out that they were seeking to accommodate the Staff Side request for harmonisation but encouraged a pragmatic approach be taken as timescales needed to be realistic.

On the pay issue Management Side acknowledged that the offer was not in line with the Staff Side expectations, but it was working within the quantum available. Management Side advised there would be no alteration to the money on offer, and encouraged the Staff Side to consider its approach as we move in to a spending review period.

Staff Side recommended that the Management Side access funds within Arm’s Length Foundations to make an improved offer.

In seeking to move closer, Staff Side wanted the commitment to harmonisation in 2018 as an agreement.

Staff Side confirmed it was content for the workforce review to consider pay and conditions of service at the Side Table and in parallel, and not as a single work stream. The Management Side responded that such an agreement would not preclude such an approach.

Adjournment

Staff Side proposed an additional sentence for agreement since it was concerned that the Management Side's harmonisation proposals were vague – essentially an agreement for another agreement.

The whole proposed agreement therefore read:

“Through the workforce discussion at the NJNC, we jointly agree to complete standardised terms and conditions across the sector in 2018. Furthermore we jointly agree to close the pay gap for each college by 50% by January 2017.”

The Staff Side stated that settlement would be subject to an appropriate uplift for 2015/16. The Staff Side considered its proposed amendment showed flexibility and patience on its part, since harmonisation would not actually begin until 2017 for a claim lodged in October 2014.

Adjournment

Management Side considered progress was being made, and was amenable to the first sentence, but was unable to agree to the second sentence of closing the gap as it believed that reaching agreements before the negotiations had begun was not possible.

The Management Side also reminded the Staff Side that the Government are a crucial part in the funding mechanism and it would not be favourable if either side pre-supposed the outcome of the standardisation negotiations.

Staff Side reminded Management Side that members are currently being balloted, that it is prepared to work with the Management Side but that members have expectations that need to be delivered on. The Staff Side stated that it would not ask members to wait until 2018 for pay harmonisation that it had requested in 2018 – the period of time was simply too long. The Staff Side stated that it needed to deliver something for members on harmonisation in 2017 – and for 50% of the college pay gap to be delivered in 2017 was a reasonable “ask”. The Staff Side stated it was trying to avoid a strike, and that progress is the only way that can be avoided.

Management Side advised it is more than willing to make commitments and agreements and put this in writing if required. Management Side expressed the duty of care it had to employees to not miss any window of opportunity to secure a pay agreement for this year and agree to move forward with the workforce for the future discussion.

The Management Side offered an agreement for complete standardisation in 2017, while urging a pragmatic approach to be taken as timescales need to be realistic, with the requirement to have the Government on board to ensure delivery.

Adjournment, after which Donny Gluckstein substituted for Pam Currie at the meeting

Staff Side returned and stated that it could agree a deal with complete pay standardisation in 2017, as long as it was agreed that all lecturers would be paid the same salaries, and that being not less than the highest paying college.

Management Side expressed concern that although progress appeared to be being made, it could not agree to the Staff Side's revision as it believed that the standardisation process would need to be negotiated and thus one cannot realistically have an agreed outcome before those negotiations have begun.

Staff Side concluded that they did not think progress has been made, since all the Management Side was actually offering was an agreement to get an agreement on harmonisation in 2017, that they do not negotiate pay and conditions together, and that they expect all lecturers to be paid the same salary as the highest paid college.

END

Date of Next Meeting

Scheduled for 17 December 2015, City of Glasgow College