

UCU SHU extraordinary branch meeting 26 March 2026

Draft minutes

There were 180 members present (155 online and 25 in person)

Also present: Julie Kelley UCU regional official and three members of SHAC (Sheffield Hallam Students Against the Cuts).

The minutes of 11 March UCU SHU branch meeting were agreed.

The Chair wished solidarity to all affected by the latest announcements and the overwhelming assault on members.

The meeting heard reports from officers, reps and members in different areas affected by staff cuts announced yesterday. There was a consistent picture of between a quarter or a third of Grade 8 staff at threat, with proposed replacements at lower grades.

Julie Kelley reported that UCU has received Section 188 notice referencing 200 full time equivalent posts at risk of redundancy. The branch is pushing for clarity on the process for the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme. Members also have a role to play in asking questions at meetings with the employer.

UCU has given notice of statutory ballot to the employer. The ballot will open 31 March and run for 5 weeks. Ballot papers should be arriving by 3 April, all urged to look out for them, vote and post asap. Looking at the speed of response to the consultative ballot and numbers in the room, a good strong ballot result is predicted.

UCU to provide expert analysis of the state of the University's finances including rationale for depth of cuts. This report is expected after easter, and we reserve the right to go back and ask for further information.

Bob Jeffery and Ruth Beresford reported on recent negotiations as part of the negotiating team.

As well as an all out attack on jobs and conditions, the proposals also include threats to collective bargaining and the national contract. The focus on pensions obscures key threat of the subsidiary company which would see assault on terms and conditions.

We must fight and have the strongest ballot result ever. As well as industrial action, further leverage will be provided by public and political pressure. Officers have prepared a report on

SHU finances showing staff numbers plunging and the worst staff / student ratio of our competitors. SHU is on track to becoming the worst University in the UK, in a cycle of decline. Members are urged to write to their MPs.

We have asked for more information and clarity including confusion around future of research.

Three students from SHAC spoke to the meeting with moving and powerful messages of solidarity. They stated that an attack on lecturers' working conditions is an attack on students' learning conditions and that they will fight back. Rapport with staff has been building during students and staff coordinated meetings at the Students Union. They are calling for a demo and student walk out on Open Day in April.

There was shock and anger from members at the proposals, and a range of comments and questions. The meeting thanked SHAC and discussed actions as part of the fight back including press coverage, political and public pressure. There was a show of hands with majority in favour of bringing a motion to Greylist the employer, which would bring further significant media coverage.