

POLICY PROPOSAL

TITLE: TRANSPARENCY ON VICE CHANCELLOR'S PAY

Policy number 2016/17-9

Passed on 8th December 2016 at policy round

PROPOSED BY: MEG MURPHY

SECONDED BY: HOLLY TURRELL

INTRODUCTION

Whilst university employees are living on inflation-eroded wages and university resources are overstretched (ever tried getting a seat in the library or wondered why so many lectures are at 08:15 and 18:15), it is outrageous that the Vice Chancellor is paid almost half a million pounds a year, claims tens of thousands of pounds in expenses, and lives virtually cost free. It is only fair that we know what the Vice Chancellor does to deserve this, especially as it is our tuition fees that fund her lifestyle.

REASON FOR CHANGE

Considering

1. The University of Bath's Vice Chancellor (VC), Dame Professor Glynis Breakwell, has a salary of over £440,000 per year, after getting a 10% pay rise in 2015, putting her amongst the highest-earning Vice-Chancellors in the country.
2. In contrast, pay for ordinary staff has fallen in value and they are increasingly being forced to work on insecure contracts.
3. By January 12th, the VC had already earned more money than the lowest paid staff at the university will in the entirety of 2016!
4. The national press¹ revealed that the VC claimed over £20,000 in home expenses last year. This includes a housekeeper whose job description includes "washing and ironing of all bedding and towels" in the University-owned five bedroom luxury apartment that the VC lives in rent-free.
5. The largest source of university income, which pays the VC's salary and expenses, is our tuition fees. The VC has campaigned for tuition fee increases.
6. The salary of the VC is decided by a secretive sub-committee of University Council, the "Remuneration Committee". One of the members of the Remuneration Committee is...the VC, though she is supposed to leave the room when her own pay is being discussed! The criteria for the Remuneration Committee's decisions are not available to students or staff.

Bath Students' Union recognises that

1. The revelations about the Vice Chancellor's excesses, and the worsening inequality at the university, have angered students and staff alike.
2. In its 50th Anniversary Year, the VC's pay and expenses have become a national news story and a source of embarrassment, detrimental to the reputation of the university as a whole.
3. Our tuition fees would be better spent on learning resources and on ensuring that our lecturers and other staff are treated fairly, than on the VC's excessive pay and expenses.
4. It the responsibility of the Remuneration Committee to ensure that the VC's pay is fair and reasonable – it has clearly failed in this regard and we do not have confidence in it.

THE PROPOSAL

Bath Students' Union will

1. Recognise that students have expressed no confidence in the Remuneration Committee and the procedures in place to set the Vice Chancellor's salary and rewards.

2. The SU President should speak with the Chair of Remuneration Committee to find out how the decision is made and report that back to students and for the SU to lobby to get Officer Representation on Remuneration Committee.
3. Support actions to raise awareness and discussion on campus about the Vice-Chancellor's pay and expenses and ongoing pay inequality at the university.

¹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3878714/University-vice-chancellor-earns-400-000-year-claims-20-000-expenses-including-2-BISCUITS-despite-living-entirely-rent-free.html>
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/400-000-a-year-university-head-claimed-2-for-biscuits-33ns77pk2>