



Monday 1 October, 2018

Dear Professor Toope,

In your email to staff on September 3rd, you acknowledge the concerns of Cambridge University staff over the deterioration of their pay. You note that you have agreed to implement the 2% increase in salaries proposed by UCEA, but state that you recommended and continue to support a higher increase in basic pay than the 2% currently on the table.

These are commendable words, but only if they are backed by actions. We ask you to come out publicly and forcefully against the UCEA offer and in support of a pay award that not only keeps pace with inflation over the past year, but begins to recover the real-terms losses which HE staff have suffered since 2009. We also ask you to support action to address the spread of insecure employment and precarity for the most vulnerable staff.

In real terms, a 2% pay “increase” is another pay cut - the ninth in a row. Since 2009, wages for staff at the University of Cambridge have risen by only 9.5%, while:

- Cumulative inflation in the Consumer Price Index has been 24.6%
- Average house prices in Cambridge have risen by nearly 90%
- UCam workplace nursery fees have risen by 35%
- The gender pay gap at Cambridge (total pay) stands at 20%
- Pension provision has been eroded in most HE schemes.

Across the HE sector nationally, real-terms pay (by CPI) has dropped more than 12% since 2009. To recover some of this, in this pay round the HE trade unions called for an increase for all staff of 7.5%, and at least £1500, and for action to address the spread of precarious contracts and pay inequality. It is a sign of staff anger at UCEA’s response that the University of Cambridge branches of UCU and Unison, representing between them more than 2000 members, are currently balloting for strike action.

We ask you to show leadership in reversing the trend of sacrificing staff pay and conditions in HE budgeting. Your predecessor presided over the ballooning of this University’s capital expenditure and cash reserves, while squeezing the staff who make this institution what it is: a place of excellence in learning and research.

After a decade of pay cuts and inaction on precarity, enough is enough. Your staff deserve better.

*Cambridge UCU Branch Committee*

*UNISON University of Cambridge Branch Committee*