

CAFAS Update No. 64

30 September 2009

Council for Academic Freedom & Academic Standards

<http://www.cafas.org.uk>

Meeting:

Saturday 10 October 2009

2.00 pm

Room 255

Birkbeck College

Malet Street

London WC1

Underground: Goodge Street, Euston Square, Euston, Russell Square, Holborn

Science, academic integrity and the General Medical Council

An enemy of the people

The playwright Henrik Ibsen wrote "An enemy of the people". A doctor discovers that the town spring has become contaminated. The spring has just been advertised as curing sickness. A huge influx of visitors is expected. They will drink the water and bring money into the town. The doctor is labeled "an enemy of the people".

In the intervening 127 years since the play was penned, the application of scientific thinking has resulted in massive advances in health and our understanding of disease. However, there are cracks in the edifice. Some corporate "science"

has flouted the fundamental safeguards of the scientific method. When concerns involve money or the "indiscretions" of the powerful, science turns into obfuscation. Transparent science has in some circumstances been replaced by a scenario of fear. There are few safe routes through which concerns about integrity can be raised.

A labyrinth of regulation, legislation, lawyers, bogus "official bodies" and conflicts of interest has served to inhibit questioning and to sideline complainants. Where public concerns do reach public attention, then (as with the MPs expenses scandal) they do so only as a result of perspicacious journalists or whistleblowers.

Scandals and regulators

The consequences of secret science and the flouting of safeguards have been predictable. The past decade has seen many scientific and ethical scandals in medicine. These scandals have led to tens of thousands of unnecessary deaths. They have also led to an unfortunate loss of public trust

in both science and rational scientific medicine. Individuals who knew about problems in advance have been bullied, fired, or (in the words of the pharmaceutical company Merck) otherwise “neutralized”. The scandals have fuelled dangerous conspiracies about parts of medicine which are truly science-based and effective.

The nurse, Margaret Haywood worked with the BBC to highlight disgraceful conditions at a Brighton hospital. She did not receive a medal. She was struck off the nursing register a few months ago by the regulator¹. In Staffordshire at least 400 hospital patients died as a result of neglect. Medical “leaders” had bullied and sidelined several “whistleblowers” who had tried to raise problems². Prior to these deaths, a junior doctor, Rita Pal, had highlighted abuse and deaths of elderly patients in a different Staffordshire hospital. Instead of assisting her, the General Medical Council (GMC, the body that regulates and registers doctors in the UK) conducted a chilling secret investigation which revolved around Dr Pal’s mental health. She subsequently brought legal proceedings against the GMC, leading to a landmark judgment in which the GMC was described as a “totalitarian regime” by Judge Charles Harris³: *"Anybody who criticises it is said to be prima facie mentally ill - what used to happen in Russia"*.

Politicians feign incomprehension. Referring to problems in Staffordshire, Health Secretary Alan Johnson said in 2009⁴: *"I don't understand why clinicians whose primary role is the safety of their patients are somehow concerned about whistleblowing. I can't understand it, quite frankly."*

The Public Interest Disclosure Act

The UK Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) of 1988 was supposed to support employees making so-called “protected disclosures”.

Having made “a disclosure of substantially the same information to his employer”, the employee is supposed to jump through various hoops involving regulators (or designated “external bodies”) before going to the media. Like the trick stairs in an Escher painting, these organizations have mission statements which belie their real

purpose. They are in practice completely unclimbable.

Curiously, those supporting this legislation seem to have no interest whatsoever in the reality of what these “regulators” and “official bodies” actually do when confronted with a problem. The effect of PIDA is to take the sunshine away, and to replace it with a wink and a nod by unaccountable technocrats. Science and academia involve “public disclosure” almost as part of their definition. It is questionable whether the PIDA has any relevance whatsoever to academia or to the basic responsibilities of a doctor.

The General Medical Council

The stated remit of the GMC is to *"protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public by ensuring proper standards in the practice of medicine"*. The GMC boasts a huge array of published principles, guidance and rules of conduct for doctors. Given that medicine has science as its foundation, many of these rules are related to science and to honesty. The rules themselves are perfectly worthy. Their application is however totally inconsistent and without precedent. The report by Dame Janet Smith into the murders by Dr Harold Shipman singled out the GMC for extensive criticism⁵. She reported that the GMC failed to deal properly with Fitness to Practice (FTP) cases, particularly when established and respected doctors were involved. The GMC has also been accused of racial bias.

Over the past few weeks the GMC has suspended a number of doctors from the medical register. Dr G Elvin was accused of having affairs with two patients and was suspended after the husband of one punched him⁶. Dr P Quartey was struck off after “climbing into bed” with a colleague (not a patient) “in a hotel room during a business trip”⁷. More seriously, Dr Steven Ashenford was erased after persuading a teenage patient with learning difficulties to perform a sex act on him at his surgery⁸. Sex is undoubtedly interesting and important. However there are aspects of trust and proper standards in medicine beyond a blowjob.

1 <http://tinyurl.com/cvtbjf>

2 <http://tinyurl.com/yczezje>

3 <http://tinyurl.com/yc2vv6d>

4 <http://tinyurl.com/dk55du>

5 <http://tinyurl.com/ydt37pz>

6 <http://tinyurl.com/ycvsnan>

7 <http://tinyurl.com/y8p9xun>

8 <http://tinyurl.com/ya3qsws>

Science is at the very heart of the practice of medicine. Defective science has the potential to kill many patients and to mislead many doctors and patients into making inappropriate prescribing decisions. An academic physician who breaches the basic safeguards of science is arguably as guilty of serious crime as is a doctor who rapes a patient. It is about time the professional “regulators” of this scientific profession engaged with science.

A “serious complaint”

On the 6th of September 2005 the University of Sheffield posted a “serious complaint”. The complaint was penned by Professor Tony Weetman, the Dean at Sheffield Medical School and Ms Rosie Valerio, Head of Human Resources. The cover letter was addressed to myself and was signed by the Vice Chancellor Robert Boucher. The subsequent events have already been extensively told^{9,10}, but it is also the common story of many others at many Universities. A satirist is required to do justice to many of these cases.

Professor Boucher wrote that he considered it “appropriate to suspend you from your position as Senior Lecturer within the School of Medicine”. Prior to this suspension, Professor Boucher had declined on four occasions to meet with me to discuss a rather straightforward matter of pharmaceutical research integrity involving a corporate sponsor of the University. He had also not responded positively to a lawyer’s letter of 25 May 2005 suggesting that such a meeting would be appropriate.

The letter of suspension stated that I was not to “attend work”. I was not to “contact members of staff or students without prior permission”. I was to “avoid making comments to any third party”. My conduct was such that it “leaves us with no alternative but to seek the institution of charges for removal from office”.

The “final act”

My “final act” according to the complaint, was the “most recent and apparent deliberate refusal to comply with a reasonable management instruction by briefing journalists [about academic freedom and integrity at the pharmaceutical University interface]”. The “journalists” in question were at the BBC, the

Lancet and the Times Higher Education Supplement.

That “final act” was hard to dispute. I had indeed “briefed journalists”. It was clearly also “deliberate”. The use of the words “apparent deliberate” could imply that the writers had convinced themselves that I was somehow operating under zombie control. I had informed the University Pro Vice Chancellor for External Affairs and the Head of Human Resources precisely what I planned to convey to those journalists. I then informed University officials that such briefing had been carried out successfully. The relevant problem was not at all mysterious. It was already well known to University officials. There was nothing in the least bit non-deliberate.

The question concerned whether it is reasonable for academics to have scientific publications and statistical “reports” penned in their names by pharmaceutical companies, while those academics are denied meaningful access to the raw data upon which these reports are based. To make matters worse, the question was whether academics should provide such a veneer of credibility even when there are clear suspicions that parts or all of the data analysis might not be credible.

The problem was particularly well known to my colleague Professor Richard Eastell since he was involved in the matter, had already admitted to the problem, and had received a clear formal complaint. He was also the Research Dean of Sheffield Medical School, as well as the Research Director of Sheffield Teaching Hospitals. In those roles he would have had key governance responsibility over medical research integrity, funding and ethics within Sheffield. He was someone who might have been expected to uphold particularly high standards, and to lead through example.

Science in a nutshell

The research had been carried out in “collaboration” with Procter and Gamble (P&G) pharmaceuticals. P&G had been providing millions of pounds to the University of Sheffield. A number of colleagues received 100% salary funding via P&G. Professor Richard Eastell served as head of the UK “Scientific Advisory Board” of P&G pharmaceuticals.

Eastell would have been fully aware of the various items of correspondence we had received

9 <http://www.slate.com/id/2133061/>

10 <http://tinyurl.com/2wamfe>

from P&G denying access to data at the very time he was signing his name on manuscripts submitted to medical journals. He had already written to me in December 2004 to say that I too should feel compelled to sign declarations to medical journals verifying the content of scientific publications while being denied access to the underlying data. He had written again via his lawyers in June 2005 to affirm that he did not have access to data underlying the three manuscripts we had “written”. The problem was not beyond the wit of any academic to understand.

The science in question involved three publications and associated “ghost” statistical reports prepared by Procter and Gamble. In each of those manuscripts it had been stated that in patients taking the osteoporosis drug risedronate (Actonel), the effect of the drug showed a threshold or plateau at a change of around 35% for a key variable NTX. That seemed surprising, because very few if any of the patients actually “compliant” with risedronate therapy would show a change of less than 35% on risedronate. There could not be a plateau if there were not any patients. However the graphs showing the separate responses of the placebo and treated arms of the studies seemed clear. What was less clear was how those graphs had been constructed. It was suspected that the graphs in all three manuscripts might have been scaled so as to omit large parts of the data. Further it was suspected that “smoothing factors” in these graphs could have been chosen so as to yield almost any shape of graph desired. Without the actual data it was impossible to be sure of any of this. In retrospect we now know that these reported findings (of a threshold in the percentage change of NTX) were false in all three manuscripts, and that graphs had indeed been judiciously “cropped” to omit about 40% of the data. With the data in hand, it is perfectly possible to make the cropped graphs take on almost any shape by choosing a “smoothing factor”.

Whose academic freedom?

It is entirely unreasonable for an academic to be expected to sign off on publications based on secret data to which neither he nor readers have proper access. So much is a “no-brainer”. The problem goes to the heart of what it means to be an academic and a scientist.

Regardless, the “complaint” of 6th of September 2005 asserted that it was I who had violated the

academic freedom of my colleagues. My conduct was apparently “incompatible with the duties of office”. It was said that I had felt “able to make unsubstantiated allegations and assert wrongdoing by his colleagues” but had then “not followed agreed University procedures”. I was directed to the “University’s agreed internal Public Interest Disclosure Procedure” and was “instructed not to go outside the University “until we had had the opportunity to investigate these concerns ourselves”. Quite what was “unsubstantiated” about the P&G affair, or what required “investigation” was always entirely unclear to me. Indeed the problem had been fully admitted.

Worse still, I had, after two years, withdrawn entirely from those “procedures” after receiving information via the Data Protection Act, and after explaining exactly why I could do nothing else but withdraw. This led to a further charge: “Lack of trust in the Faculty management and the University” were apparently an offense. I wondered whether it is even meaningful to express “trust” (or its converse) in the collection of academics that constitute “a University”? Whatever the case, I continue to consider the University of Sheffield with huge affection. It contains many academic friends who have considerable integrity, and I want it to uphold its long tradition as an effective University.

The “investigation”

In 2005 after being accused of not obeying the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act, I decided to give it a try, by placing a formal complaint with the General Medical Council. In the meantime there were a flurry of news reports in the THES, BBC, Observer, Sunday Times, NPR, Wall Street Journal.

Richard Eastell conveyed to the GMC a small part of his own correspondence stating that he did not have access to the data about which he had written. He also conveyed to the council part of his own correspondence of December 2004 in which he had attempted to make me do the same. The GMC later regarded this revelation as “embarrassing” to him.

The GMC then proceeded to do nothing.

In 2006 P&G released the raw data to the academics who were intended to front the three publications (including myself).

Eighteen months later in 2007, Eastell admitted in public that he had indeed not had access to data in

the first of the three publications when it was published. He admitted that the key scientific finding regarding the NTX change plateau in that publication had been false. There was indeed no threshold change in NTX in patients taking risedronate. As I had suspected, graphs had in fact been cropped so as to omit around 40% of the data. By combining the placebo and treated arms of the study together in a completely erroneous analysis, the *mea culpa* came up with a curious compromise. Through this interesting analysis it was concluded that despite the fact that the results as previously presented were wrong, the previous “conclusions” were somehow correct. Fortunately readers of the *mea culpa* were not so easily baffled^{11,12}. The other two manuscripts were not addressed.

Still the GMC proceeded to do nothing for a further 18 months. Needless to say, P&G have refused to place the underlying raw data into the public domain so that scientists can see for themselves. They have also refused to allow me to do so. The data, it is said, are their proprietary confidential information and are not amenable to public scrutiny. Their scientific “findings” based on those data are apparently not proprietary.

Science is about openness and transparency. Any legitimate scientist should be extremely happy to discuss their actions in detail and in public, and to share data so that others can decide whether they are telling the truth. A refusal to share data implies, almost by definition, an absence of science.

“Disciplinary action”

A few weeks ago the Guardian reported¹³ that Professor Eastell was “facing disciplinary action” and “hearings” over “ghost writing”. They also reported some details of the case of Peter Wilmshurst who is being sued by a US company NMT medical after refusing to sign off (as first author) a manuscript he believed to be false, but where access to data was denied. The company have since admitted that several reported “findings” were indeed deceptive. The authors who did agree to sign have apparently also been reported to the GMC.

The GMC may not understand the scientific approach to scientific problems. They regard

everything that Professor Eastell has said as “confidential”. Statements about scientific procedure by his lawyers are redacted to the point of containing pages of entirely redacted text. Why lawyers?

I have accordingly not conveyed any details here about my communications with the GMC or their musings about integrity. I will instead wait patiently for any excuses to be finalised. The GMC does have in the Eastell affair, and in the NMT Medical saga the opportunity to uphold the most basic principles of good conduct in medicine. It is also their prerogative to set a terrible precedent by failing to uphold their own rules, and to send a message that pharmaceutical science in this country does not matter. Whatever the case, it is important that doctors and scientists clearly understand the precedents.

What is it that ordinary doctors or famously important academics are allowed to get away with, and who should decide?

Aubrey Blumsohn, Sheffield

Staff return to work at Tower Hamlets College after compulsory job loss plans are scrapped

25 September 2009

Members of UCU have returned to work at Tower Hamlets College after hammering out an agreement to avoid compulsory redundancies during 18 hours of talks at the arbitration service ACAS. UCU members had been on strike for almost a month in their battle to save jobs. The union said it was delighted that agreement had finally been reached so that staff could get back to doing what they do best - providing education for the community. In June the college announced that it was looking to get rid of 25 full-time posts and to halve student places on its Skills for Life programme, as well as getting rid of important outreach centres and support services for students and learners. Tower Hamlets College works with some of the most underprivileged communities in London and

11 <http://tinyurl.com/y87j6sr>

12 <http://tinyurl.com/yec74j7>

13 <http://tinyurl.com/nk5mer>

UCU today said it was looking forward to restoring positive industrial relations and working constructively to address the on-going serious challenges facing the college.

Commenting on the agreement, UCU head of further education, Barry Lovejoy said: 'Our members have fought a tremendous campaign and UCU is pleased to have finally reached an agreement with the college. Tower Hamlets has the highest unemployment of any borough in the country and needs a strong local college. Staff do a fantastic job in working with some of the most vulnerable people in society and I am delighted that the threat of compulsory redundancies has been lifted. The college faces a number of tough challenges and it is essential that management and the unions have a constructive working relationship so that we can face them together.'

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Accessed 25 September 2009 from
UCU - University and College Union - Staff return to work at Tower hamlets College...
<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4178&from=4109> Website URL :
<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4178>

***CAFAS Update* seeks to provide an open forum for opinion and discussion.
Items do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council.**

UCU start Greylisting of London Metropolitan University

Email from Sally Hunt to all UCU members on Tuesday 1st Sep 2009

London Met staff and students fighting to save jobs

Dear colleague,

As you will know, I seldom email you directly and only do so when I feel that a situation is extremely important to our union. As such, it is with regret that I write to you today to formally notify you of the greylisting of London Metropolitan University (LMU). Those of you who have been in the union since its inception or were in one of the predecessor unions, AUT or NATFHE, will be aware that this is the most serious sanction available to us and this will be the first time in UCU's history when greylisting has been formally implemented rather than threatened (such as at Keele University and Nottingham Trent University).

As of today, 1 September, UCU will be asking colleagues across the country, other trade unions, labour movement organisations and the international academic community to support our members at the university in any way possible, including:

- * non-attendance, speaking at or organising academic or other conferences at LMU
- * not applying for any advertised jobs at LMU
- * not giving lectures at LMU
- * not accepting positions as visiting professors or researchers at LMU
- * not writing for any academic journal which is edited at or produced by LMU
- * not taking up new contracts as external examiners for taught courses.

If you are able to support in this way, please email: jstephens@ucu.org.uk

Please could I also ask that you, as a matter of urgency, write to the vice-chancellor at LMU, Alfred Morris (alfred.morris@londonmet.ac.uk) to:

- * express your concern
- * state that that you will not take part in any collaboration with LMU for the duration of greylisting
- * request that the findings of the independent enquiry currently being conducted by Deloitte Touche are made public and are acted upon
- * call for an urgent internal review of LM management following the reports of both HEFCE and Deloitte Touche

**Please copy any correspondence to:
jstephens@ucu.org.uk**

All UCU members are also asked to consider the following questions and respond as soon as possible to jstephens@ucu.org.uk in order that we support our colleagues and students at London Metropolitan as effectively as possible:

- * Are you involved in collaborative research activity with LMU?
- * Are you aware of any collaboration between LMU and other HE/FE institutions, including international?
- * Are you planning to attend any conferences and/or are you booked as an external speaker/guest lecture?
- * Are you aware of any high profile speakers or events being planned at LMU?
- * Are you aware or involved in any other collaborative relationships - such as with business?
- * Have you been approached to be an external examiner at LMU?

Background to the dispute:

As I am sure you will by now be aware, toward the end of last year, LMU was hit by a £15 million reduction in recurring grant and repayment demands totalling more than £36 million by HEFCE following submissions of incorrect student completion records. The university responded by stating that they intended to cut 550 posts. Despite our best efforts over the last nine months to attempt to persuade the university to enter into formal negotiations to reach a resolution, and a vigorous, nationally and regionally supported branch campaign, including industrial action, the university is forging ahead with the planned compulsory redundancies – the first 50 FTEs of which are imminent.

The situation at London Metropolitan University is unprecedented. The vice-chancellor, Brian Roper resigned in March and a special report into

HEFCE's role in the crisis at LMU was published last month (available here). After months of public pressure from the academic community, UCU and our sister unions, Deloitte Touche have been commissioned to undertake an independent inquiry into the situation at London Met and UCU will be contributing to this inquiry.

UCU's position:

We believe that this reinforces the dire need for a fresh start for London Metropolitan. The staff and the students deserve a new leadership and new, open and productive industrial relations. Yet, in spite of our calls for a suspension of their proposals until after the independent reports have been made public, the management appears dogmatically committed to press on with its plans to make 550 redundancies of which many, we fear, will be compulsory.

I believe that we cannot stand back and allow this university to be destroyed. We cannot stand by and allow hundreds of staff and students pay the price for a catastrophic failure of management and governance. As a national union, we must be able to say that it is unacceptable for staff to pay for mismanagement with their jobs and students to suffer huge detriment to their education and we must establish the principle that universities must be accountable for their actions.

UCU remains committed to a negotiated solution and we hope that management will back away from a course which we believe will threaten the long-term future of the university.

Many thanks,

**Sally Hunt,
UCU General Secretary**

*(Accessed from
<http://www.lmuucu.devisland.net/lmuucu-greylist-010909.html>; 25 September 2009)*

New research guidelines threat to academic freedom, warns UCU

23 September 2009

UCU has warned that new guidelines on research funding are a threat to academic freedom and risk heavily restricting universities' chances of making significant breakthroughs. Guidance from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), in its Research Excellence Framework, has confirmed that 25% of future research will be assessed on 'economic impacts.' The union warned today that focusing research in areas dictated by government or business could result in many other areas of valuable research missing out on vital funding. Furthermore, UCU expressed serious concerns that unless universities have complete freedom to properly conduct their own rigorous research there was a very real risk to institutions' academic freedom. In April, Alistair Darling reallocated £106 million of research funding towards areas with 'predicted economic potential'. However, earlier this month leading scientists from the Campaign for Science and Engineering (CASE) warned that scientific breakthroughs could be put at risk because of the inherent difficulty of trying to predict what research would create the biggest impact. UCU general secretary, Sally Hunt, said: 'Academic research should never be at the behest of market forces. History has taught us that some of the biggest breakthroughs have come from speculative research and it is wrong to try and measure projects purely on their economic potential. 'Academic research benefits all of society and we shouldn't be looking to reduce its scope and power. If Britain wants to be a world leader in innovation it should be listening to academics, not just the siren calls of big business. Unless we have an urgent review of research assessment in this country there is a very real chance that many vital projects will lose out. We are already on the edge of a very slippery slope.'

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Viewpoint

How we go about our work in daily life depends ultimately on how we relate to one another economically. Today's revived form of finance capital has developed the world economy and its 'service economies' to meet its needs. As with its earlier 19th century form, change has been accompanied by huge social cost, waste and crisis. Some, however, still seem to cling to the belief that all services and even life itself are quantifiable and can be regulated by the market. In practice, over the past three decades it has been demonstrated that not all services can be commodified and make profit; that many work issues in today's complex society cannot be wholly reduced to the cash nexus. Two such issues have always been health and education. Every society needs them; every society must find ways to fund them because their activities are services to meet long term human need, not the needs of commodity production. These activities may lead to untold wealth but that occurs outside the immediate work of educating, researching and medical care. To quantify or to speculate on the future results would be tantamount to crystal ball gazing. The main reason health and education need funding, apart from building requirements etc., is to pay the people who work in them. To confine them to economic relations and practices when their relations and practices are clearly more complex than these, would be to destroy their usefulness. Yet, those people entrusted with running colleges and universities continue to swallow the ideology that their institutions can be run as a business. As their ideology flows from the practices of finance capital and the bankers, it can be no surprise that they are asking staff and students to pay for the present crisis.

What is the thinking behind making people redundant and closing courses and departments? In London Metropolitan University's case, it seems to be limited to the desire for money. Staff and students are expected to pay for financial mismanagement. The senior executives want to protect their bonuses (£2 million p.a.) and the staff performance related pay scheme. Were the university to suspend this scheme and the bonuses, the unions - UCU and Unison - argue there would be enough savings to prevent job losses. There are also other ways to make savings without compulsory redundancies and course closure. But it is sadly evident that the need for high quality education and research

will not be satisfied without students and staff fighting for it.

Staff and students at Tower Hamlets fought successfully for their jobs and education. Their bottom line was no compulsory redundancies. It took a month of indefinite strike action to secure their great victory. The suffering of students by strike action would have been outweighed by the benefit of retaining their courses. It is far better to postpone education and fight for a month than to lose it altogether through inaction.

It seems that a similar fight will need to be waged by all in education to remove the criterion of economic impact for funding research. No-one can know what long term benefits research can have. To reduce research to meeting short term monetary gain is ludicrous. An example of placing business requirements before those of research is seen in the fight Aubrey Blumsohn has had to wage. The university preferred to go for the money. The General Medical Council is now forced to deal with the problems, as Blumsohn explains.

It is painfully clear today that education and research need funding, as their services are costly. Like health, they are to meet human need for which society must pay, as the longer-term outcomes are to the benefit of all. Where they are subject to the short term business needs of the funders and are regulated by the market or the state, academic freedom and standards perish and the needs of the future generation are ignored. The waste that this has involved is high. There are better ways to fund and regulate education and research than those we have experienced so far.

PB, GT

NOTICES

Meeting Saturday 10 October 2009 Room 255

Meeting 2.00pm

Agenda

1. Minutes
2. Matters arising
3. Academic Freedom
4. EREC
5. Casework and AOB

Officers' meeting in Room 255 at 13.30

Cafas Reports

Details are on www.cafas.org.uk

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CONSTITUTION

CAFAS' aims are outlined on the membership form. The full constitution can be obtained from the Secretary or www.cafas.org.uk.

CAFAS was founded in February 1994. It depends on subscriptions and an active membership. It meets in January, April, July and September/October.

Next deadline: 30 November 2009

Please send letters, news items and articles to:
Pat Brady patrickbrady@talktalk.net & Geraldine
Thorpe thorpegm@gmail.com

Cafas Meetings 2009-2010

10 October 2009 Room 255

16 January 2010 Room 254

24 April 2010 Room 252

3 July 2010 Room 252

Below is an extract from a London Metropolitan University Unison and UCU campaign leaflet for a lobby of the governors on 30 September 2009

SAVE LONDON MET

CUT BONUSES – NOT JOBS

Students and staff, members of both UCU and UNISON, have fought for months to stop the devastation of our university. As a result the threatened job cuts have been significantly reduced, Sir David Melville is conducting an inquiry into the reasons for the financial crisis that led to this situation in the first place, and we have stopped the threatened outsourcing of IT and media services.

But significant numbers of staff still face compulsory redundancy and whoever is to blame for the financial mess management have made it clear that they want more job cuts next year. The unions have made it clear to management that as long as compulsory redundancies are threatened we will continue to do all we can to stop them.

Last week UCU's General Secretary, Sally Hunt, told UCU members that if we stop compulsory redundancies now it will be more difficult for management to push them through in future so "now is the time to keep up the pressure".

Meetings of both unions have voted that if management don't withdraw the compulsory redundancies we will step up the action at the beginning of the new semester.

We also are demanding that the Governors agree to cut the £2m in bonuses paid to London Met's senior management each year and use the money to save jobs.

- **No compulsory redundancies**
 - **No fat cat bonuses**
-

DO YOU BELIEVE

- That academic standards have been dumbed down throughout the higher and further education sector?
- That this decline has been accompanied by the escalating rhetoric of 'excellence' and 'world-class'?
- That the number of contact hours between teachers and students, which the Dearing Report described as a proper measure of the quality of education, has been reduced across the board?
- That there are all sorts of pressures on examiners to pass candidates who would previously have failed?
- That it is far easier to obtain Firsts and Upper Seconds than it used to be?
- That practices which used to be treated as academically unacceptable, or even as cheating, are now widely regarded as normal and inevitable.
- That the effect of the RAE and other pressures on academics is to increase the quantity of research, not the quality, and to restrict innovative and critical thought?
- That there are pressures, often of a commercial nature, to avoid certain areas of research, or to falsify results or to distort their conclusions and significance?
- That, despite lip-service to the importance of teaching, universities and colleges take little account of this in career advancement?
- That academic values have been largely displaced by market values?
- That the stated 'mission' of universities to serve the community has been abandoned in favour of commercial priorities?
- That education in the UK no longer has the status of a right bringing social benefits, but is instead treated as a commodity to be bought and sold?
- That discrimination against women and ethnic minorities is still rife in the employment and promotion practices of tertiary education, despite the multicultural community it is supposed to serve?
- That the work of the union in fighting discrimination and victimisation can usefully be supplemented by specialised advice and support from an organisation which focuses on issues of academic freedom and standards?

If you believe that many or most of these propositions are true, you ought to be a

CAFAS member and your UCU branch ought to affiliate.

Membership Secretary & Treasurer: Dr Eva Link, 17 Highcliffe, Clivedon Court, London W13 8DP 02089982569; rekgemL1982@yahoo.co.uk

If you would like a speaker from CAFAS to address a branch meeting, contact Colwyn Williamson, colwynwilliamson@hotmail.com; 07970 838 276

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SUBSCRIPTION

**Dear Members
Some of you have forgotten to pay your membership fee.**

Could you please be kind enough to check the date of your last payment on the address label? If you should find there "**" or "****!!!" could you please send a cheque without further delay as your contribution is absolutely crucial to the well being of CAFAS.**

Many thanks for your contribution.

**Your Treasurer and Membership Secretary
Eva Link
17 Highcliffe,
Clivedon Court,
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