

University of Sussex

Local pension provision

- We are sorry if you faced any disruption today on campus. 29 members of the Unite union who represent our technical services staff on campus voted to take strike action in relation to local pensions.
- The University of Sussex has over 2,500 staff across many different roles, all concerned with supporting a good academic experience at Sussex. Feedback from the National Student Survey and other student feedback generally praises the support and quality of the services they get from staff at Sussex.
- The University seeks to ensure that we have good terms and conditions for all our staff. For example, all staff will this month receive a pay rise of over four per cent matching inflation, following a three per cent rise in May, under a national pay agreement. All staff will continue to have access to contributory pension schemes matched with contributions from the University as the employer.
- We have been in consultation and formal negotiation with our campus trades unions over local pension provision at Sussex. Final salary pension schemes everywhere are vulnerable because their costs and liabilities keep rising, and assets simply can't keep pace. We need to make sure that local pension arrangements are sustainable and affordable. Without responsible action now, there is a real risk to local pension provision.
- You can read some facts about the pension proposal on the other side of this leaflet. If you wish to know any more information you can email **uspas@sussex.ac.uk**

University of Sussex
October 2008

Facts on the Sussex pension proposals

We will ...

- We will protect and keep open the local “final salary” pension scheme for all 500 current members of the scheme.
- We will provide a flexible new pension scheme for future members of staff. We aim to increase the number of staff who choose an employer pension and are making provision for their retirement.
- We will also open the new scheme to support existing staff without pensions. Several hundred current staff have no employer pension scheme because they have already opted not to join the local “final salary” pension scheme, many because of its cost and inflexibility.
- We have responded to issues raised in consultations and negotiations by pension members and trades unions – for example phasing necessary increases in the contribution rates over three years.
- We will put more money into pensions. Overall the University will be committing over £4m annually to our local pension scheme, up from £2.2m just three years ago.

We are not ...

- We are not closing the local pension scheme for current members – we are putting new arrangements in place for future staff.
- We are not reducing the funding provided to local schemes – we will be paying over £4m a year.
- We are not doing this in order to treat support staff differently – we have to act responsibly as an employer to ensure that local pension provision is affordable and sustainable. We simply don't control the lecturers' national pension scheme.
- We are not refusing to negotiate – we have been in consultation and negotiation with campus trades unions since March 2007. Unite chose to withdraw and 29 members voted to take strike action.
- We are not halving the employer contribution rate to USPAS – we will be paying 24.5 per cent of pensionable salary.