



Wednesday 1st February 2023

Dear Sheila

Notification of Dispute

Further to your email of 23rd January and LNCT of 26th January, the EIS-FELA branch sets out our position on how supposed 'consultation' has progressed to date re a number of issues which we term overall as "cuts" and which have negatively impacted on staff morale, terms and conditions in the College for a number of months. This is also notification of a Dispute in line with the Recognition and Procedures Agreement.

1. In Spring 2022, college management stated at collective bargaining meetings that there were financial pressures on the College. This wasn't new information as the College management are often claiming there are significant financial pressures. TU reps raised that there had, potentially, been financial mismanagement and questioned some of the College's priorities on spending. This was not consultation.
2. A draft VS Scheme was shared with TU reps after the collective bargaining meetings which took place in June 2022. This was not a consultation and TU reps were told that the College Board had not yet approved the scheme. This is contrary to what you have now stated in your email of 23rd January.
3. Again, in September you shared the 'action plan' detailing the 19 cuts after the collective bargaining meeting had taken place. TU reps asked a number of questions regarding the action plan, some of which were vaguely responded to by management and answers to the remainder had to be obtained using FOI requests. There has been no discussion on any of this information, which could have resulted in further information being requested and may have been the nucleus of discussions about avoiding redundancy, about which, crucially, there has been no discussion whatsoever.
4. College management called a consultation meeting on VS Scheme and mitigations with two days' notice in October. The meeting was eventually scheduled for 1st November 2022 and it was outlined by HR that this was a consultation meeting in terms of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
5. The meeting on 1st November 2022 was certainly not as you have outlined. College management did inform TU reps that they wished to begin the statutory consultation process in relation to funding and financial challenges and the VS Scheme. However, College management could not answer as to what specifically TUs were being consulted on. TUs were informed the VS Scheme would open and that, indeed, some of the 'mitigations' outlined in the action plan had already been brought into effect. It was entirely unclear how the duty to consult was being implemented per the 1992 Act. Furthermore, some of the proposed cuts impacted on terms and conditions and should have been subject to negotiation per the Recognition and Procedures Agreement. Negotiation was never forthcoming from management.
6. Another meeting took place on 10th November 2022 where further information on College finances was questioned. Again, it was unclear as to what management were consulting on as

management re-iterated the VS Scheme would open and that cuts had already begun. College management also introduced the idea of a possible restructure at the meeting. This included management stating that some staff were 'under-utilised' and that some classes may be cancelled. There was no further detail on this and management refused to comment further when asked any questions on this proposal. Questions were also asked of College management as to what representations they had made to Scottish Government, via Colleges Scotland, to increase revenue for Further Education i.e. had they called on the Government to raise and review taxes. College management could not answer this. College management stated their financial strategy going forward would rely on an increase in commercial activity, included but not limited to, increasing international students attending the college.

7. Due to this, the submission of the HR1 form and the opening of the Scheme on 14th November, TU reps refused to attend any more 'consultation' meetings as these were entirely disingenuous. A dispute was raised, instead, by EIS-FELA and UNISON reps on 16th November. Specific issues were raised with the VS process and included a referral to the Equality and Human Rights Commission regarding poorly conducted Equality Impact Assessment. Other issues were no impact assessment or audit of staff left following VS and opaque decision making regarding SFC's approval of the Scheme via Glasgow Regional Board. College management refused to hold a dispute meeting in line with the RPAs.
8. In November 2022, EIS-FELA members reported their fixed term contracts were ending, despite being told previously they would be extended, and that this decision had been made by senior college management.
9. EIS-FELA members also stated their timetables were being unilaterally changed to reflect a tea break in morning and afternoon which, in effect, would not give them a break but would see their time "re-utilised" as further delivery time. This had the impact of increasing the number of units taught by staff within the same amount of contact time, impacting bank staff's income, and deducting any additional payment for full-time staff already exceeding their class contact hours. This change was being imposed as one of the 19 mitigations without consultation and, more importantly, without negotiation. A dispute was raised on 16th November and a collective grievance on 23rd November. A dispute meeting was eventually arranged on 20th December and a further one on 16th January. College management failed to implement *status quo* in the interim which meant timetables were already changed. College management had clearly decided the dispute was resolved following 16th January meeting because the paper on Semesterisation, at the top of Table 2, stated that the Teaching hours for "3 Block FT Course" was 531 hours. This is calculated at 14.75 hours per course per block, already assuming delivery time is 2.75 hours per unit, correcting an "inexactitude", as you called it. **This should have been brought to the table at the dispute meeting on Monday because it shows that you had already decided the outcome of the dispute regarding timetabling tea breaks**
10. Another dispute was submitted to College management on 21st December regarding cuts to Learning Support Lecturers and the introduction of learning support advisers instead. Other than an acknowledgement, no response has been forthcoming on this dispute yet.
11. At the LNCT meeting on 26th January College management raised yet another proposal which they are seeking to implement under the disguise of 'consultation' i.e. 'semesterisation' of the teaching calendar, cutting the delivery time of units and re-utilising to increase the number of units taught by each lecturer. College management have confirmed this was another one of the 19 'mitigations' in the 'action plan' but this detailed proposal with its wide-reaching and potentially detrimental consequences for lecturers and students was only made available to EIS-FELA one week before the LNC. EIS-FELA reps stated this proposal should be negotiated

as it impacts terms and conditions. EIS-FELA reps raised that this was a serious concern for the quality of education and asked if SFC were aware of this proposal. Management have been asked to provide an impact assessment that reducing contact hours would not reduce the quality of learning. It is necessary to point out that rather than correct an “inexactitude” you are doing yet another disservice to lecturers who are adept at finding ways of overcoming imperfect college systems and have continued to deliver 3 hour classes, plus a break, within the work sessions of their contract. EIS-FELA do not agree that current teaching hours for “3 Blocks FT Course” are 531 hours. They are 576.

12. A further issue was brought to EIS-FELA reps’ attention on 26th January, although not by College management. We understand the College is not going to continue supporting the TU Education Centre but no discussion has been initiated as to what this means for lecturers teaching in the Centre. Indeed, TU reps at the College have not been informed of this by College management.

TU reps have raised that these proposals have disproportionate impact on fixed-term staff and part-time staff which may be classed as unfavourable treatment in terms of the legislation. TU reps have also raised that these cuts are likely to mask subjective discriminatory practices and that full-time members of staff will be under more pressure which can lead to burn out.

EIS-FELA members believe College management have been dishonest and underhand in initiating these cuts. We believe management have undermined the spirit of collective bargaining and have actively breached the recognition and procedures agreements. Considering EIS-FELA’s findings in June 2022 that 76% of respondents to our survey on workplace culture believed there was an ‘authoritarian leadership style’ and 60% had been subjected to or witnessed bullying, we suggest it is time management took their staff seriously. This is not a ‘Fair Work’ workplace which it should be according to the SFC’s Outcomes Agreement.

We are raising these issues, together, as one complete Dispute and wish to convene a Dispute meeting within five working days. We ask that the proposal for ‘semesterisation’ is held in abeyance pending the outcome of this dispute meeting, and that we agree that all management’s cuts’ proposals are reviewed jointly at the Dispute meeting. The outcome we seek is agreement. If a Dispute meeting is not convened timeously, or *status quo* is not implemented on new proposals, we take this as a further breach of the RPA and will seek a consultative industrial action ballot of members.

EIS-FELA Branch Officers on behalf of EIS-FELA members at City of Glasgow College