Statement on the University’s response to Coronavirus and the unions’ role

The Coronavirus presents society and our University with unprecedented challenges. During this crisis, the unions continue to represent our members across all the job families, on issues of health and safety, through terms and conditions, to matters that now touch on the very future of the institution.

The University is discussing a package of drastic measures to ensure the current and future financial viability of the University and has begun consultation with the unions around these. For this consultation to be meaningful we are setting out some principles that we think are important for all to follow:

**Fairness and equity:** The decisions made should be fair and be seen to be fair. From whatever job family, and whatever our grade, whether on fixed term or permanent contracts, we are all members of this community who contribute to its success and will help it to thrive in the future. We have been working in new and challenging circumstances to keep the University functioning, and that deserves proper recognition.

**Timely consultation:** We understand the need for urgency, but the unions still need adequate time to hear proposals, and to discuss them with our committees and membership, so that we can respond in a thoroughly reasoned manner. The University needs time to hear our responses and give them due consideration. In that way better and less panic-driven decisions will be made. Consultation should not be merely a box-ticking exercise.

**Financial transparency:** The fullest possible financial information should be made available to the unions so that we can comment and point out where we think savings might be made, or to question assumptions behind the University’s proposals. Again, this will contribute to the best possible decision-making.

**Job protection, good jobs:** The fallout from Coronavirus means unemployment is likely to rise and remain high for a while to come. Knowing this, we will seek to protect jobs. The need to protect jobs should not be counterbalanced to the quality of employment. Working at the University needs to be safe and enjoyable for all. The University should continue to pay proper regard to workload, conditions of work, and decent pay. Appropriate measures to protect jobs and conditions will have our full support.

**Safety first:** The unions will continue to highlight health and safety for all employees. Everyone who arrives at work in good health should leave in good health. The University should prioritise the safety and the physical and mental health of its employees above financial considerations. Proper assessment, time and resources should be allocated to protect all employees.

**Roadmap:** The unions on behalf of staff ask to be part of planning the roadmap for the University in the years ahead. Cooperation of staff will be enhanced by involving them in planning and decision-making from now on. Never has it been more important to work in open and honest partnership. We would like a seat at the table that makes plans for our future.

The challenges we face as an institution demand the fullest possible engagement of staff and it is in the spirit of fostering this that we have drawn up these proposals.

Signed: Branches of UCU, Unison and Unite at University of Nottingham, 7 May 2020