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Welcome to the November newsletter. This will be the last one for 2014 so we hope you find this mix of union and sector information on sustainability and climate change useful. See you again in January.

1. UCU Reps and Networks

We are pleased to announce that we have smashed our target for increasing the number of Environment Reps in the union. At the UCU annual congress in May a target of a 10% increase in reps by May 2015 was agreed. 5 months down the line and we have already achieved a 20% increase! A big welcome to all these new reps.

We still have a way to go before we get to one rep in every branch but this trend shows the level of interest in making this a core union issue.

Another target for 2014-15 is to establish networks in the regions and countries of the UK. Our first network meeting takes place in the UCU Leeds Office on November 24. This will bring together environment reps from across the Yorkshire and Humberside region. The plan is to reinforce the support for existing reps and continue the push for new members to take the role on.

2. USS ShareAction

The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) is the largest pension fund in the UK. Major concerns about a range of ethical issues have been raised with USS members in recent years – many of which may also put at risk the long term financial returns of our pension investments. As with the future of our pension scheme, the Trustee

Board is not acting in our interests. ShareAction have launched a petition, calling on our pension fund to properly listen to our views. They will submit the petition at USS's annual institutions' meeting on 4 December, so we have just six weeks to gather as many signatures as possible. You can find out more here or click here to sign your name and add pressure on USS if you are a member of the scheme.

https://action.shareaction.org/page/s/listen-to-us?&utm_medium=email&utm_source=sactionlive&utm_content=4+-+We+have+just+6+weeks+for+USS+to+hear+our&utm_campaign=USSS&source=USSS

3. UCU Environment Rep Training

Another crucial area of support is offering training for all new reps. We have updated the course and have tested it on the Environment Reps course run in October at UCU Head Office.

The next 3 day course is in Birmingham on April 29-30 and May 20, 2015. Details on this link:

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4245>

4. Victory at Glasgow University

Glasgow University became the first HE institution in Europe to vote for divestment from fossil fuels. After 12 months of campaigning, led by the Glasgow University Climate Action Society and involving over 1,300 students, the university court voted to begin divesting £18m from the fossil fuel industry and freeze new investments across its entire endowment of £128m.

<http://campaigns.gofossilfree.org/petitions/university-staff-for-fossil-fuel-divestment>

This campaign in the education sector was supported by Naomi Klein in her visit to the UK this month. Read a report of the meeting at the TUC attended by UCU members and officers <http://touchstoneblog.org.uk/2014/10/naomi-klein-inspired-us-all-at-the-tuc/>

UCU supports divestment from fossil fuels and the ShareAction Green Light campaign.

<http://www.shareaction.org/greenlightcampaign>

Even the Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, has put on record that "the vast majority of the world's oil reserves are unburnable if the world is to avoid catastrophic climate change."

<http://www.emergingmarkets.org/Article/3389530/Economics-and-Policy/Carney-hammers-the-point-you-cant-burn-all-the-oil.html>

5. UCU Fundraising

A huge thank you to the UCU members and friends who made up the UCU/Greener Jobs Alliance server teams at music festivals this year. Our volunteers worked at Glastonbury, Latitude, Reading and Leeds for the Workers Beer Company and raised nearly £2,000 This money is being used to support our work in 2014. This includes the UCU Regional Environment Networks,

contributions to the publication of the '1 million climate jobs' pamphlet, and the Global Labour Institute summer school at Northern College.

6. 'Responsible futures' project

UCU is supporting this new initiative from the National Union of Students. We are involved in the pilot of an accreditation mark for a whole institution approach to environmental sustainability and social responsibility. It puts staff and student engagement at the heart of the process and is being trialled in 7 universities and 5 colleges. If successful it will be available to all institutions in 2015-16.

7. UNESCO Global Action Programme

The UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) comes to a close this year with a conference in Nagoya, Japan. Our Global Union Federation, Educational International, has submitted a commitment to the follow-up action programme being launched at the conference. UCU's work has been referenced in the commitment.

Susan Hopgood, EI President from the Australian Education Union, will be one of the opening panel speakers.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-world-conference-on-esd-2014/>

8. Skills for a green economy

Making the transition to a low carbon economy did not figure much at the party annual conferences in September / October (except the Green Party). The Greener Jobs Alliance has produced a leaflet '*Jobs, education and a sustainable future*' to help get this into the debate in the lead up to the election in May, 2015.

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/t/2/GJA_DL_leaf_sept14-1.pdf

UCU members are urged to use the proposals made in the leaflet to get a discussion going on priority areas for education policy.

More organisations are joining the call for action on skills. The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) has produced a report '*Preparing for the Perfect Storm: Skills for a sustainable economy*'

<http://www.iema.net/skills-sustainable-economy-preparing-perfect-storm>

"In the new business world, sustainability will no longer be a 'bolt on' to the way businesses work....Environment and sustainability must be integrated into the national curriculum". The report contains a range of case studies and surveys to back these points up.

9. One million climate jobs pamphlet

London Met University hosted the Campaign against Climate Change conference on September 20, 2014. The new edition of the '1 million climate jobs' pamphlet was launched. This report sets out the latest evidence and new understanding on the transformation to a low-carbon economy. It can be downloaded here:

<http://www.campaigncc.org/sites/data/files/sites/data/files/Docs/one%20million%20climate%20jobs%202014.pdf>

Hard copies cost £2.50 or are available free to UCU members on request (see contact at the end of the newsletter).

10. Time to Act Campaign: People's Climate March

The UCU Wales and Greener Jobs Alliance banners were on the 40,000 strong-march that took place in London and other UK cities on September 21, 2014. In New York the biggest climate demonstration in history took place with over 300,000 on the streets. An excellent film '*Climate Change: Disruption*' has been made about this mobilisation with the focus on people's power and social justice. This should be shown in every workplace and is an excellent resource for the education sector to raise awareness. <http://watchdisruption.com/>

The next step is to build for the Climate mobilisations in the UK on March 7, 2015.

11. IPCC Reports

The final instalment of the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was launched on 2 November in Copenhagen, Denmark - after a week of government negotiations to agree a Summary for Policymakers (SPM). <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Following the reports of three Working Groups over the past year - covering the physical science of climate change (**Working Group 1**), vulnerability to climate impacts and adaptation (**Working Group 2**), and mitigation strategies to tackle climate change (**Working Group 3**). It marks the culmination of a 5-year-effort by 830 authors, 1200 other contributors and 3700 expert reviewers drawing on more than 30,000 pieces of research and 143,000 expert comments to produce an unprecedented body of evidence.

The IPCC has unequivocally shown that climate change is **here, man-made and already having dangerous impacts** across all continents and the ocean. The most exhaustive and authoritative climate study to date, the AR5 report also make it clear that **global warming can still be kept below the politically agreed limit of 2DegC** compared to preindustrial levels, and that securing a safe climate future does not have to cost the earth.

The implications for the education sector are clear. Providing the research, knowledge and skills to deal with the biggest challenge facing the planet are needed. The occasional nod in the direction of sustainability will no longer cut it. This needs to be made core business.

Get in touch

If you are a UCU member looking for advice on sustainable development or have ideas for greening the FHE sector please let us know. Contact: Graham Petersen, UCU Environment Co-ordinator:

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