

Riposte to VCs FACT and FICTION



CLAIM: 'UCEA has indicated a real willingness to begin negotiations'.

FACT: UCEA have had 3 months to negotiate – and have failed

We submitted our pay claim in October 2005 and set a deadline of 2 December for a positive response, after which we would ballot members on industrial action. However, UCEA would not meet us until January 10th, after the deadline of December 2nd. The meeting on the 10th January was the last chance for the employers to make us an offer before we balloted.

CLAIM: 'AUT's pay claim was submitted the night before the meeting'

FACT: There is no new pay claim – UCEA simply refuse to negotiate around the October claim

This is a serious distortion. Just before the meeting of the 10th January, UCEA asked for further details showing how they could cost our October 2005 claim. In spite of the fact that it is normal practice for the employers to make the unions an offer, we provided them with some proposals showing how they could cost the claim. UCEA are now trying to spin this as a 'new claim'.

The truth is that after all this time, after 3 months, we have still had nothing positive from the employers. No offer and no positive response to our claim. We have no option now but to raise the pressure on the employers to show them we are serious.

To see the October pay claim and the expansion document go to:
www.aut.org.uk/paybacktime

CLAIM: 'The University of xxxx accepts the case for investing a significant proportion of the increased fee income on staffing'.

FACT: The University of xxxx is confusing the issue of the National Pay Framework with that of the additional income coming onstream in 2006.

Where it has been properly agreed and implemented, some gains have been made through the National Pay Framework. However, where members' pay has risen, through the protection AUT won under the Memorandum of Understanding, this relates to our 2004 pay claim and represents only the first step toward winning decent pay for academic staff. The next step is to see an across the board uplift in salaries to address the historic decline in salaries

that has taken place over the last twenty years. That is the basis on which we made our 2005-6 pay claim in October.

Universities have £3.5bn of new money coming into the sector in the next three years. The claim for at least one-third of the new income to be spent on pay originates from Alan Johnson's quote in Parliament, based on what Universities UK, the body that represents most British universities, told him. UCEA have utterly failed to address our claim, or to fulfill their promise to Alan Johnson.

CLAIM: 'Any industrial action...would prove very damaging to the University at this time'

FACT: Failure to address the scandal of low pay will cause far greater and irreparable damage to the university

No one wants to take industrial action, least of all, perhaps, those who work in education. However, our members will not be ignored or marginalized forever. They are the heart of universities and they deserve to be remunerated as professionals. Academic pay has declined by 40% in comparison with equivalent professions over the last twenty years.

It is in no one's interests to permit the scandal of low pay in universities to continue any longer. Students, who now pay £3000 fees, have a right to be taught by highly motivated teaching staff and academic professionals deserve to be rewarded in proportion to their skills and their dedication.

In the context of rising workloads and stress levels, without decisive action to raise pay, universities will face a real crisis in recruitment and retention of staff.

In balloting now, we are not merely asking for more money, we are making a stand for the future of the sector.

**VOTE YES TO STRIKE ACTION
VOTE YES TO ACTION-SHORT-OF-A-STRIKE**