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Pay Negotiations in England

Members know that UCU balloted most of our members in English FE colleges as a result of the college employers' recommendation that there should be a pay freeze. This issue reports on the result of that ballot and the elected representatives on the FE committee's decision to call a strike on 10 November.

We also report on some recent agreements reached where UCU branches have adopted an a new strategy to submit the same pay claim to their college but also to add in issues that members in that college wanted to see some progress on.

response to our claim for an extra £1 per working hour for all staff.

At a special meeting of the FE committee last Saturday, the numbers voting and the yes vote were considered. It was agreed that members in those branches who are part of the dispute should take strike action on Tuesday 10 November 2015.

It was also agreed to make arrangements for a rally and other activities in central London on 10 November.

All members called to take strike action should join pickets and attend local events or the national rally. It is important that we send the strongest and loudest message possible to colleges that staff in FE need a pay rise.

More details on the activities organised for 10 November will follow, but check with your branch and get involved in activities.

National Dispute – Strike on 10 November

The recent ballot for strike action resulted in a 'Yes' vote. This was as a result of the AoC's recommending to colleges that they freeze pay in

The FE committee also agreed to seek views from branches on further targeted strikes on the national claim.

UCU Wins Deals for More Pay and to Tackle Workload

Some branches are not part of the dispute against the AoC's recommendation of a pay freeze. With the national union's agreement, these branches have adopted a parallel process of submitting the national pay claim to their college along with additional claims to address members' concerns and local circumstances. For example, sometimes there has been no pay award in recent years or the problem is not just about the % increase but difficulties with the scale point members are being paid on. With the support of their regional officers, there have been a number of successes where this strategy has resulted in agreements which have produced gains for members.

At South Essex College – we have reached agreement on a pay increase which consolidated last year's award; provides increases of between 1.5% and 1.0% for the bulk of our members; increasing the unqualified rate between 14.3% and 1.6%, plus an agreement on the majority of points in the workload code of practice.

At Canterbury College - we have a deal that provides a pay increase of 1% and will put nearly £1800 in the

pockets of lecturers stuck on point 27 (the majority of academic staff at the college). It also removes point 21 and potentially point 25 next year to make the starting salary for both qualified and unqualified lecturers significantly larger.

At West Suffolk College – last year there was no pay award. This year a deal has been reached for a pay rise plus improvements on the employers' approach to workload

At South Downs College – the claim meant that the branch not only resisted management attempts to cut holidays but they achieved a workload agreement and made progress on improving the position of casual staff.

At City of Bath College – negotiations have resulted in an offer that provides for a 1% increase this year and for improvements in workloads, a key issue of concerns to members. The local branch has leave to put the offer to their members.

While these agreements do not meet the full claim submitted by those branches, they do deliver improvements for UCU members. This is as a direct result of the 'effective bargaining strategy' that was adopted by the union at a conference last year.

This is only a start. Negotiations using this strategy are taking place in a number of other branches and we will keep members informed of successes and difficulties.