

## UCU Landbased Education Committee

The Committee held its last two meetings at two landbased colleges, Easton near Norwich in July and Sparsholt in Hampshire in October. Both meetings were very useful in making links with local branches and in enabling the committee to hear what affects members in their work. Both meetings concluded with a short tour of college facilities.

The venue for the next meeting is in London. Yes, we know they have all been in the south recently! The committee has previously met in Manchester and the July meeting will be held 'up north' – offers of venues please? We aim to hold a meeting in Wales and perhaps, in the future, in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Why not come to our next meeting in Britannia Street on **Friday 2 March** at 11.00am? We welcome new members to the committee and those who would just like to visit.

If you would like to know more about what is involved contact Christiane Ohsan at [cohsan@ucu.org.uk](mailto:cohsan@ucu.org.uk) or Bernice Waugh [Bernice.waugh@wcoh.ac.uk](mailto:Bernice.waugh@wcoh.ac.uk).

On the agenda for the March meeting will be reports on pay and conditions including legislation updates, changes to initial teacher training, education reports, branch reports and motions to congress. The Committee is also looking at arrangements for the annual landbased conference in Summer 2007.

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### NPTC Landbased Advisory Committee

*Report from Bernice Waugh NEC  
Landbased Education member*

This body as its name suggests covers a wide range of Landbased interests. Recently, presentations on the qualifications provision in Floristry,

Greenkeeping, Agricultural & Garden Machinery BAGMA and the Equine industry have been a part of the agenda. The chief verifier for NPTC

reports on assessor standards and there are regular updates on qualification developments and trends. The meetings are held at the Stoneleigh Park Show Ground.

At the last meeting in October there was considerable discussion about the Landbased and Environmental 14 –19 Specialised Diploma expected to be launched in September 2009. Visit this website if you want to find out more and **'have your say'**, please go to [www.diplomalbe.co.uk](http://www.diplomalbe.co.uk).

## Health and Safety

Some quite sobering facts about health and safety were part of an NPTC presentation given in July.

Agriculture and horticulture have an extremely poor health and safety record. There were 706 fatal accidents in the 14 years period from 90/91 to 03/04. 238 employees, 348 self-employed, 99 members of the public, including 53 children and 21 cockle pickers. There are many more serious injuries that do not result in death with estimates from the HSE of 10,000 reportable non-fatal injuries each year. People in the industry can also be permanently disabled by ill health. *(Asthma rates are twice the national average.)*

NPTC offer health and safety qualifications at a range of levels suitable for industry, students, union or safety reps. Visit [www.nptc.org.uk](http://www.nptc.org.uk) for more information.

The HSE believe there needs to be a fundamental change in attitude to H&S in agriculture and horticulture in order to achieve significant reductions in accidents and ill-health. If H&S is a part of your teaching syllabus you will find the TUC courses helpful in your teaching in addition to helping your colleagues.

Officers in your branch can find out more about health and safety in the workplace (and get a qualification) by enrolling on a UCU or TUC health and safety course. These training programmes provide technical and legal information and aim to help reps understand the general procedures for coping with hazards.

Go to [www.ucu.org.uk](http://www.ucu.org.uk) or [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk), look in health and safety training and then courses or go to [www.unionlearn](http://www.unionlearn).

Union reps have the right to attend, in

paid work time, union approved safety courses. If you are denied access to union safety training contact your regional rep for advice.

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## News from Chris Dyke – UCU's rep on Lantra

### Interesting Times!

At incorporation over a dozen years ago colleges were urged to go for growth and paid to do so. That resulted in many colleges diversifying into sports studies, building skills etc. All of a sudden colleges needed to respond to student needs. This led to a boom in animal care and equine students. On the more traditional side there has always been a good market for RHS courses, organic gardening etc for those for whom gardening is a serious hobby but not maybe a career. On the back of these colleges secured funding and many expanded.

Now comes the crunch. The new buzzwords are 'employer led', 'work based' and NVQs. The new Train to Gain scheme intends to give all workers access to training up to NVQ level 2. On the surface this should be good news but underneath it poses problems for colleges on three fronts.

- Much of the training and assessing needs to be done in the work place, something which many colleges find difficult and expensive.
- The scheme is employment led with emphasis on specific sectors of employment. In some areas landbased topics do not appear on the list at all, meaning landbased workers cannot access the scheme. It is also highly unlikely that the animal care and equine industries will produce much demand for the scheme or get approval for involvement.

- Finally, much of the funding for Train to Gain has been produced by cutting back on funding for traditional courses, such as RHS. In response to this wind change colleges have been axing courses and restructuring. Always a painful process. In some cases fees have been put up sharply risking loss in numbers.

This move to lay much more emphasis on employment is also likely to be here for a while as the chief proponent of the scheme is non other than Gordon Brown! We can also expect increasing pressure on students being trained for present and future employment as the treasury for more direct results from the money put into FE.

## 14-19 Diploma

As mentioned recently Lantra has been tasked to produce a special landbased diploma for the 14-19 age group. This could be a major development in schools across the country, or it could be a damp squib. Either way, keep an eye on developments by going to: [www.diplomalbe.co.uk](http://www.diplomalbe.co.uk).

## FE PAY PARITY

Is your College stuck at the lights?

By 1 February 2007 the minimum salary for qualified lecturers in England should be £21,492 (outside London) and the national scale maximum £ 32,529. There are higher scales for advanced practitioners and managers. A majority of Colleges have gone through the green light and implemented this agreement. Is your College one of them or is it stuck on red? Check out UCUs FE Pay campaign pages at [www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1909](http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1909).

## Adult Education Cuts

Education cuts have an impact on all staff. Have there been cuts or sharp increases in fees for adult, community or 19+ education at your college? Let UCU know. UCU is campaigning on the cuts but needs to have more evidence and stories about how the cuts have affected staff and students. Go to the website and tell your story [www.ucu.org](http://www.ucu.org) It **DOES** matter!

## Get organised!

Landbased colleges continue to feel funding pressures. It is a wonder that ten years after incorporation there are still 'stand alone' landbased colleges left, many having been merged with other institutions. It does appear to be the case that members in less active branches tend to have worse conditions and often worse pay, despite all the union does at national level, than in more active branches. Changes to pay and conditions in these colleges are often imposed without negotiation with staff

Get organised. Get trained. Get to your regional meetings! Find out what happens at the other branches in your region. You will be welcomed and you will learn a lot of useful stuff the union can and is doing to support you in your branch.

## UCU's first Congress and branch/membership representation

There will be meeting of landbased members at this year's congress, (May 30th – June 1st. Venue tbc) If your branch has 100 plus members you will be able to send a delegate along with a motion to the congress. Who will your delegate be and what will be the motion from your branch?

Branches with fewer than 100 members will be aggregated with larger branches. Is your branch being aggregated? Do you know who will be the delegate? For more information contact your UCU regional office- Act quickly as otherwise you will be disenfranchised!

### ***How much will it cost to go to Congress?***

There is no cost to get to, or attend the congress as travel and accommodation costs are paid. UCU will also pay for creche and/or care. You may need to take annual leave – 3 days plus travelling time as congress this year is during the week .

For more information about attending congress contact Christiane, [cohsan@ucu.org](mailto:cohsan@ucu.org).

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## **10 day TUC Employment Law Course**

*(From Bernice Waugh branch sec at Welsh College of Horticulture and Landbased rep on the NEC)*

What a good course! So good I want to do the next level. Management did refuse my request for paid time off to attend at a local FE college, but advice and a letter from the Wales regional office meant that I did attend. One of the highlights was attending an employment tribunal in Liverpool, our class saw a very interesting unfair dismissal case (and we got the ferry across the Mersey).

The training has already given me more confidence in dealing with management and made me much more effective in tutorials with students who are on work experience. There have been all the other benefits such as meeting other branch officers and shop stewards from other industries and being 'on the other side of the fence' as a student again. Find a course in your area, go to [www.unionlearn](http://www.unionlearn).

## **College and University Support Network**

The College and University Support Network (CUSN) was established in Autumn 2006 by the Teacher Support Network, an independent charity with 130 years experience of helping teachers improve their health and wellbeing. Before the launch of CUSN, a partnership with NATFHE meant lecturers could access Teacher Support Network's services. The merger with AUT to form UCU mean Teacher Support Network had the expertise and financial backing to create a new charity especially for the post-compulsory sector.

CUSN provides free and confidential support services specifically for **all staff** working in adult, further and higher education. CUSN complements the work of the union offering information and advice, telephone counselling, online coaching, money advice and financial assistance.

CUSN's services can be accessed at [www.cusn.info](http://www.cusn.info) or 08000 32 99 52.

## **UCU Elections**

Election notices went out in the October edition of the UC magazine. The Landbased NEC member is elected from the FE sector.

For nomination forms and guidance notes go to [www.ucu.org.uk](http://www.ucu.org.uk).

**Don't leave it too late the closing date is 1 December**

**And, whether you are standing or not, USE YOUR VOTE!**