

IN THIS FIRST ISSUE:-

- **UCU SAYS NO TO PRIVATISATION OF ACADEMIC FUNCTIONS**
- **PROGRESS ON FRAMEWORK**
- **FEEDBACK FROM THE JOINT NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING (FEBRUARY 5)**
- **PENSION OPTIONS FOR SALARY SACRIFICE**
- **FIXED TERM/HOURLY PAID STAFF**
- **UCU SCOTLAND CAMPAIGNS AGAINST CUTS IN SCOTTISH HIGHER EDUCATION**
- **WHO'S WHO ON THE HE TEAM**

UCU SAYS NO TO PRIVATISATION OF ACADEMIC FUNCTIONS

At the JNCHES meeting of 5 February, UCU raised the strongest objections to moves to privatise key academic functions, particularly in relation to overseas students.

On 8 February a meeting took place at Oxford Brookes between UCU members, university management and INTO University partnerships. INTO proposals which they have implemented elsewhere would cover the recruitment of overseas students, the provision of UK based foundation courses and teaching of English language. UCU members critically quizzed both INTO and the University about what assurances could be given about the quality of student provision and assessment and the safeguarding of employment conditions, drawing on experiences at Exeter and East Anglia where the rates for hourly paid lecturers are being cut by INTO by £4 an hour.

INTO are said to have approached ten other universities. At Newcastle, despite a well supported UCU protest against similar arrangements, staff were transferred to INTO employment recently.

At the JNCHES meeting, UCU received the strongest support from the other campus unions in opposing this type of development. We urged the employers to join with us in condemning such proposals and to joint monitoring of possible developments, as well as issuing joint guidance to ensure that employers meet their obligations under the law and collective bargaining to disclose information. UCU members are urged to be vigilant and to press their employers to ensure that they are not contemplating any similar moves.

FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION

We now have 70 agreements on new pay and grading structures across the UK higher education sector. Negotiations have been long and tough in many institutions. Some employers continue to try and prevent academic lecturing staff progression from grade Ac2 to grade Ac3 and some have tried to restrict progression opportunities for academic-related staff. Others see the framework as an opportunity to restructure and save money rather than increase pay levels.

Notwithstanding those difficulties we are seeing some significant increases in staff pay for members as a result of the framework. For example, at Edinburgh, the starting salary for lecturing staff has increased by 29% (compared with the previous national grade), at Hull the starting salary for academic-related staff has increased by 32%. In the post-92 sector, half of all the agreements provide additional automatic incremental progression for senior lecturers over and above the Appendix C maximum salary, the remaining agreements provide discretionary contribution pay above the grade maximum. Of the agreements concluded in the post-92 sector most provide fractional contracts for hourly paid lecturers which results in pay increases of at least 40% and the opportunity to progress through annual increments to the Ac3 senior lecturer grade. Negotiations on the assimilation of hourly-paid staff are ongoing across the sector.

The use of the national library of academic role profiles has to date minimised problems with academic members being red circled, thousands of UCU members have been green circled and are now paid

at the correct level for the work they carry out. We have managed to reduce the levels of red-circling in a number of institutions by negotiation, campaigning and action by members.

However, there is still much work to do: LAs and branches need to ensure that a commitment to carry out an equal pay reviews post-implementation is met. LAs and branches are also negotiating on other outstanding matters such as promotion criteria, contribution pay, and market supplements.

We also need to provide support to those local associations and branches where progress is slow and the employers appear little concerned about the August 2006 deadline. Progress is especially difficult in small institutions and UCU will be approaching the Guild HE to speed up implementation in those institutions.

At the next meeting of the Higher Education Committee members will be asked to approve proposals to progress framework implementation in each and every institution where agreement has yet to be reached.

Successful framework implementation remains a priority for the HE team and Branches and Local Associations should call on assistance from their regional office and head office where they encounter difficulties.

For more information contact: Andy Pike (apike@ucu.org.uk) and/or Jane Thompson (jthompson@ucu.org.uk)

JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION STAFF (JNCHES) MEETS TO DISCUSS REVIEWS

At the meeting of the Joint National Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) one of the main items for discussion on 5 February was the review of the future of JNCHES itself which formed part of the 2006 pay settlement.

Employers, and the non-academic unions, will be pressing to move to single table bargaining. UCU's higher education committee has stated our commitment to the dual subcommittee structure and the need to increase flexibility between the two tables in addressing issues of pay, whilst at the same time continuing to ensure that our objective of equal pay for work of equal value can be met. UCU representatives also pressed the employers to demonstrate greater commitment to the JNCHES process and to reinforce the need for national pay bargaining. At present, the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) is consulting with institutions about the future of JNCHES, including consideration of a range of options, some of which would move away from national pay bargaining. Although the UCEA stress that this is just a consideration of options, there are clearly a small number of employers who believe

that determining pay independently would be to their advantage, they don't say it would benefit employees.

Part of the 2006 pay deal was the agreement to establish a further review to look at the financial position of higher education institutions. Proposals to establish this review were considered by the JNCHES meeting and the terms of reference, as set out in the pay agreement, were confirmed. This will include examining the forecast income and expenditure of individual institutions, as well as levels of pay following the implementation of the 2004 Framework Agreement. An approach to the DFES resulted in an indication that they would be willing to provide funding to support this review. This will help to ensure the necessary rigour of the review which is due to report by the end of autumn 2008.

Finally, JNCHES considered a document on equal pay reviews, which was generally welcomed by all parties. However, UCU pointed out that some parts of the text may give the impression of contradicting terms of the Framework Agreement and this needed to be resolved before the document was issued. It is expected that an agreed document will be approved by 12 March.

PENSION OPTIONS FOR SALARY SACRIFICE

As from the 1 April 2007, employees and employers can agree to a '*salary sacrifice*' scheme, which enables staff to receive certain benefits in kind from employers, which will not have any adverse impact on pensions. Specifically:-

- employer provided childcare benefits
- workplace parking
- employer provided cycles and cycle safety equipment
- employer provided leisure centres

can be charged against salaries without liability for national insurance contributions. Where employers are contemplating such schemes, they should negotiate with UCU so that we can ensure that the savings derived from this scheme, can be applied for the benefit of staff.

FIXED-TERM AND HOURLY-PAID STAFF

We know that job insecurity and casualisation blights our higher education system, bringing with it inefficiency, inequality and personal stress. That is why fixed-term and hourly-paid staff are a priority for the UCU.

Although there has been no formal committee ahead of the first UCU Congress in May, a group of fixed-term and hourly-paid members have met to discuss relevant issues and to act as an advisory body to the HEC and HE team during the transitional year. The group will be meeting again on 12 March.

We have also published new campaign packs to help Higher Education branches and LAs in negotiating and campaigning against casualisation. The campaign packs include a wide range of resources including guidance on negotiating policies and how to use the Fixed-Term regulations. The packs also include posters and leaflets to help local associations and branches to recruit and organise. The campaign packs are

being posted out to branches, LA's and Fixed-term/Hourly Paid staff reps imminently. If you require more, please contact Justine Stephens, Head of Campaigns at jstephens@ucu.org.uk.

We have been monitoring the implementation of the fixed-term regulations and supporting members in using the legislation to address less favourable treatment or to secure permanent employment.

We are also supporting negotiations on assimilating hourly-paid staff to the new pay and grading structures being agreed under the Framework Agreement. It is essential that hourly-paid staff benefit from the implementation of the Framework Agreement and at last have the opportunity to have their pay linked to recognised grading structures and to benefit from annual incremental progression in the same way as other staff.

For more information contact: Jane Thompson (jthompson@ucu.org.uk)

UCU SCOTLAND CAMPAIGNS AGAINST CUTS IN SCOTTISH HIGHER EDUCATION

A spate of restructuring plans threatening job losses and cuts in courses has hit Scottish higher education in the run-up to the May 2007 Scottish Parliament elections. UCU Scotland are responding by campaigning against the cuts, while urging Ministers – and all political parties – to provide the funding required to maintain the excellent reputation of Scotland's universities.

On 22 January, Scotland's First Minister, Jack McConnell, told a Scottish Funding Council "strategic dialogue" conference of his personal "absolute commitment" to real terms increases in funding. But even as he spoke, some of his audience were preparing to announce plans for deep cuts, which have hit staff and students in recent weeks.

Glasgow University had already said that, without additional funded places, it would withdraw from the Crichton campus in Dumfries. This was followed by Dundee University's cuts plan, threatening a number of areas including community education, languages and the university botanic garden. Strathclyde's restructuring of the business school, threatening twelve jobs, was soon compounded by a campus-wide plan to cut staffing over three years, starting with a 1% cut and building to 7%. A large scale early retirement and voluntary severance exercise is already underway at Glasgow Caledonian University.

The Local Associations concerned have responded robustly, using negotiating and redundancy consultation rights with officials from UCU Scottish Regional Office in support, together with wider campaigning activity. Members and management have been left in no doubt of the union's determination to prevent any compulsory redundancy. But management have also been challenged on their financial reports and any unnecessary job losses are being resisted.

UCU's Scottish official, David Bleiman, has written to the First Minister to express concern that cuts are being announced in advance of the Scottish Spending Review 2007 and of the election, seeking a meeting. UCU Scotland Officers held an emergency meeting on 8 February and the cuts crisis will be discussed by UCU Scotland Executive at their meetings on 23 February.

HE NEWS ROUND-UP

HE NEWS ROUND-UP

HE NEWS ROUND-UP

Lecturers at the University of Westminster are to be balloted for industrial action over an imminent "redundancy" in the School of Media, Art and Design (MAD). Jill Jones, the Union Negotiating Secretary, made clear, "This would be a 'first'. No compulsory redundancies happened before even when specialist departments closed. "

The union chair, Chris Ellins, said: 'This is a dispute that should never have happened. There is no way that this is a genuine redundancy. This person's subject areas can be used across the university on a wide range of courses. Why has the HR director

barred him from teaching where work exists?'

The union branch representative at Harrow where this school is based, Peter McLoughlin, added, 'This is yet another example of why the recent staff survey showed very low confidence in the leadership of the university. They are allowing this to proceed but without regard for proper processes or rationale. Instead of bringing this line manager into line they are risking a big dispute.' Management has so far refused to use ACAS to resolve matters, leaving us little choice but to take action.

Increases in Limits of Tribunal Awards

As from 1 February the weekly limit for the calculation of awards by Employment Tribunal increased from £290 to £310 per week. This means that the maximum statutory redundancy award is increased from £8,700 to £9,300. The maximum limit for the compensatory award moves to £60,600 from £58,400. The minimum award for unfair dismissals relating to trade union activity or action in pursuit of health and safety matters increases from £4000 to £4200.

Victory pay-out after longest ever HE dispute

London Metropolitan University has just paid out £169,718 in compensation to 23

lecturers, members of UCU, who fought against unfair dismissal. The original employment tribunal was won by NATFHE in early 2005. Since then, the university has also lost an employment appeal tribunal and been denied an appeal to the court of appeal.

UCU criticises university ban on Same Sex Partnerships

UCU has criticised the vice chancellor of Canterbury Christ Church University for the banning of civil partnership ceremonies - but not marriages - on university premises. The UCU branch, of which UCU Joint President Dennis Hayes is a member passed a motion of condemnation.

www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2007

MEET OUR HE TEAM MEMBERS

WHO IS WHO IN HE?

In our first edition of HE News, meet our team members. We will have more on the HE Team in our next issue:-

Name	Position	Contact
<i>Malcolm Keight</i>	National Head of the Higher Education Department (Senior Management Team)	mkeight@ucu.org.uk
<i>Rachel Curley</i>	HE Assistant General Secretary (currently on maternity leave)	rcurley@ucu.org.uk
<i>Andy Pike</i>	Senior National Official	apike@ucu.org.uk
<i>Jane Thompson</i>	HE Assistant General Secretary (maternity leave cover)	jthompson@ucu.org.uk
<i>Stephen Court</i>	Senior Research Officer	scourt@ucu.org.uk
<i>Rob Copeland</i>	Policy Officer	rcopeland@ucu.org.uk
<i>Moray McAulay</i>	Policy Officer (maternity leave cover)	mmcaulay@ucu.org.uk
<i>Louise Hunt</i>	Secretarial support to Malcolm Keight & the HE Team	lhunt@ucu.org.uk
<i>Christine Bernabe</i>	HE Team Support/Secretary	cbernabe@ucu.org.uk

Visit: <http://www.ucu.org.uk>