

In this issue

Pay progress
LSC to withdraw funding for H&S
National Stress Conference
Branch news
UCU national elections
Prison Education News
Classroom Observation
Save Adult Education

Pay Progress

Our campaign to get the new pay scales implemented in all colleges has reached an important milestone. Latest information now shows 51% of colleges have reached agreement with UCU on the introduction of the 8 point scale. This key element of the 2003/5 national agreement provides significant pay increases for members.

We may at last have reached a tipping point. The 137 colleges who have yet to agree the scales are no longer able to claim that only a minority have put the new scales in place.

UCU has recently issued press releases to local and regional media and newspapers identifying colleges who have yet to reach agreement and calling on them to start serious talks to implement the new scales.

Its quotes **Barry Lovejoy, UCU National Head of Further Education**

"It's time to talk. All the colleges that haven't implemented these crucial pay scales should enter meaningful negotiations with us and agree a timetable for their introduction.

"Further education colleges are too often seen as second-class to schools and the pay discrepancy between lecturers and schoolteachers is a reason for that. Colleges need to seize this opportunity to get fair pay

for lecturers once and for all. Together, we can draw a line under this."

"UCU will negotiate with colleges taking into account local circumstances on a timetable for the introduction of the scales but those colleges should be in no doubt that we expect an agreement to be honoured."

In a further development the national employers' organisation, the Association of Colleges, (AoC) has agreed to write to all colleges jointly with UCU and other trade unions reminding them of the nationally recommended pay agreement. In particular the letter will draw attention to the paragraph in this year's pay agreement which states:

"Local college management and joint trade unions are encouraged to enter into meaningful and realistic discussions, where those have not already taken place, to reach agreement on a timetable for modernising pay by the end of March 2007."

LSC to withdraw funding from health and safety

UCU has questioned if the Learning and Skills Council consulted the Health and Safety Commission before announcing that it will withdraw funding from vital health and safety courses.

In its newly published annual statement of funding priorities, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) stated that funding for some short courses including health and safety, first aid and food safety courses, will be withdrawn. The LSC states that these courses should in future be provided by employers who have a legal duty to do so.

In a letter sent to the Learning and Skills Council on Monday 23 October, the University and College Union asks if the Health and Safety Commission, any other organisations, or the lecturers who teach these courses were consulted on the closures.

The union also asks what evidence there is that employers who currently send workers on LSC-funded training will now provide alternative health and safety training of a decent standard.

The union made it's requests under the Freedom of Information Act.

In a statement to the press, Roger Kline, head of equality and employment rights at UCU, said:

'Making the decision to close these courses should have been done in consultation with the Health and Safety Commission. We wonder if that was the case. Feedback from our members who teach these courses suggests that they were not consulted. Lecturers are astonished at the suggestion that these courses will now be carried out as part of the employer's statutory duties. Given that we know that one in three employers do not offer any training whatsoever, we are not confident that they will step in to the breach and provide these courses themselves. There is a risk we'll end up with workplaces where nobody is trained in the basics of health and safety, first aid, and food safety.'

In other health and safety news, UCU has written to employer organisations in FE and HE reminding them of the important new Fire Safety Order which came into force on 1 October 2006. For further details visit:

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051541.htm>.

UCU National Stress Conference

23 November 2006, London

UCU is organising a major national conference on tackling stress in further and higher education. It will take place in London on 23 November. It will be co-sponsored by the Colleges and Universities Support Network, and will include speakers on the causes of the high stress levels in both sectors, and plenary and workshop discussions on how to tackle it.

Meanwhile, UCU has just conducted a major survey of members across FE and HE on stress. The survey will be used to highlight the scale and causes of stress and will inform our bargaining priorities. The initial headline results will be available in late autumn with a full report in the New Year.

Full details of the Conference have been sent to all branches/LAs, and can be downloaded at <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1848>



**Book your place now as places will be limited.
Contact Sharon Russell on 020 7520 3242**

*news.... branch news.... branch news bra
branch news...branch news...branch news...*

UCU defends agreement at Bradford College

UCU members and reps were outraged at Bradford College when it appeared that local managers were reneging on a pay deal struck earlier this year. The agreement on implementing the harmonised modernising pay agreement also included criteria for accessing the top point 37 on the scale. However management appeared to withdraw from an element of this, putting the agreement in jeopardy.

After further negotiations broke down the local branch organised a well attended meeting of members, and lodged a collective dispute with the Board of Governors. Members also indicated their willingness to be balloted on industrial action if this failed.

Following further last minute talks an agreement was re-established and members will now have the ability to be considered for access to point 37 backdated to last year. Members will also receive 3% cost of living award from 01.08.06, an improvement on the 2006/07 national deal. Martyn Moss, Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Official, who assisted in the talks, commented:

"This was an unfortunate situation and I am pleased that the agreement has been re-established and a further trade dispute at the college has been avoided. Reps and members should be congratulated on standing up for what they believed was an important principle."

UCU halts PRP at Leeds, Thomas Danby

When managers at Leeds, Thomas Danby College proposed to include a system of Performance Related Pay to the new modernising pay arrangements at the college UCU members were outraged. Geoff Riley,

Branch secretary was flooded with emails of protest from local members.

UCU's response was to launch a joint campaigning and negotiating strategy, including mass leafleting of members and the preparation of a detailed UCU submission debunking the myths about the benefits of PRP, highlighting the flaws in the local proposals, including how they may be discriminatory.

Fairly quickly the Principal withdrew the proposals and UCU have now indicated a willingness to conclude talks on a new appraisal scheme that is **not** linked to members incremental progression on the pay structure. Further talks will also take place on the pay structure itself. Martyn Moss, Regional Official said

"PRP is not welcome at any college in Yorkshire and Humberside and it was critical that UCU provided a robust response to these developments. Local branch officers and members should be congratulated for achieving this outcome."

UCU

National Elections

Nominations are now open for all national Officers, NEC members (including HE, FE and equality seats), Trustees and the position of General Secretary, to take office in June 2007.

Calling notice was included with the latest issue of UC magazine.

**Nominations close on
1 December 2006.**

Full information, including nomination forms, can be found at:

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

Prison Education

in the news:

To see how the union has been representing the interests of Prison Education members recently. Click on the following links:

<http://www.fenews.co.uk/newsview.asp?n=1965>

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1847>

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1776>

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/crimeandpunishment/story/0,,1834098,00.html>

<http://www.pensionsage.com/news/July%202006%20news/news280706.htm>

<http://www.fenews.co.uk/newsview.asp?n=1746>

Classroom Observation

Although inspection is supposed to have become lighter for "good" colleges, self-assessment in many colleges seems to have become much harder.

Members in many colleges face many more observations with much stricter criteria and with potentially serious sanctions. There are union guidelines on classroom observation but these were written 10 years ago in what now seems like a very different time and place. We are reviewing these guidelines and will be updating them.

If you have good or bad experiences with college policies on classroom observations, let Dan Taubman have them as soon as possible at dtaubman@ucu.org.uk

SAVE ADULT EDUCATION - *What you can do*

UCU is campaigning to challenge the government's funding priorities for further and adult education. Despite the government's mantra of the "Education, Education, Education" and ongoing rhetoric of lifelong learning being the key to social mobility:

- 22.5% of cash for adult education is planned to be cut by 2010.
- half a million students will lose their courses.
- funding for post-19 education has actually fallen by 3%.
- FE remains under funded by 11% compared to schools.

We need as many MPs as possible to sign the following Early Day Motion.

EDM 2646 Provision of Adult Education

"This House welcomes the Government's policy of giving priority to adult learning to those in greatest need but is concerned about the way this policy is being implemented at local level; observes that this has resulted in substantial cuts in adult learning programmes with a disproportionate impact on specific groups; and therefore

calls on the Department for Education and Skills and the Learning and Skills Council to undertake an urgent assessment of the impact of funding policies on adults with learning disabilities, black and ethnic minority communities, and women and older learners".

Branches and individual members should ask their MP **NOW** to sign the EDM. So far 63 MPS have signed. We need more signatures before the end of this parliamentary session i.e. before 16 November.

Check if your MP has signed this EDM by going to:

www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1801

To contact your MP: go to www.parliament.uk/directories/hciolist/s/alms.cfm

Please see draft letter on next page which you can amend to suit your circumstances.

Also available on: http://www.aut.org.uk/media/docs/7/4/afecuts_mpletter_1.doc



[.....] college branch of University and College Union (UCU)
Postal address

Telephone numbers / branch website

Email address

Dear

**ACTION TO SAVE ADULT FURTHER EDUCATION
- a campaign to prevent course closures and excessive fee increases**

I am writing to draw your attention to my organisation's concerns about the impact of government funding priorities on education opportunities for adult learners and to sign the Early Day motion 2646.

- By the government's own admission up to 500,000 adult learners risk losing their courses as a result of priority being given to 16-19s and adult basic skills. Further education colleges and local authority-run adult education services are faced with impossible choices about the range of courses they run for adults and the fees they charge. 22.5% of cash for adult education is planned to be cut by 2010.
- half a million students will lose their courses
- funding for post-19 education has actually fallen by 3%
- FE remains under funded by 11% compared to schools

In my college/service for example [example]

The government justifies its policy on the grounds that it has other priorities but the courses at risk are often vital stepping stones for people coming back into education and have widely accepted social and health benefits. The skills learned here are often those very skills employers claim are missing. At a time when the proportion of older people is increasing rapidly, numbers of young people are set to decline from 2009, and two in three of the new jobs to be created in the next decade will be filled not by new young labour market entrants but by adults, this doesn't make sense.

I would ask you to

1. Sign early day motion 2646
2. Meet with the local UCU branch to discuss the cuts in this area
3. Write to the secretary of state for education and science asking him to ensure that opportunities for access to a full range of adult education courses in this constituency will be maintained

Yours sincerely

For more information and details about the campaign see www.ucu.org.uk