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Push on pay scales bringing results

Our campaign to push colleges into negotiations on implementing the new pay scale is continuing to make steady progress. 68% of colleges have now reached agreement or are in negotiation, on the introduction of the shortened pay spine for qualified lecturers.

The UCU website www.ucu.org.uk gives the latest information on our traffic lights classification. 137 colleges have now reached agreement and classified as green and 58 are now on amber, having started talks.

Since the beginning of the campaign in November, 26 colleges have moved to negotiations and there have been 15 new agreements. Colleges that are still on red are now part of a diminishing minority and management must be forced to explain why, if others can sign up for talks, they can't.

What you can do

- Ask your branch if they've received the advice on helping press the college into negotiations.
- Offer your support to help get negotiations moving.
- Perhaps you could sign a petition, give out leaflets and help write a branch newsletter?
- Be sure to attend any branch meetings to discuss this.
- Show your support and wear the **'Time to Talk Pay'** stickers due to arrive at branches shortly.
- Join in any publicity events or other actions.

Election for UCU General Secretary and NEC

Nominations for UCU trustees, general secretary, officer and national executive committee positions closed on 1 December 2006. Ballots will take place from 7 February – 7 March 2007. Any member who has not received ballot material for the elections in which they are entitled to vote by Thursday 15 February, should go to www.ucu.org.uk/elections to submit their ballot paper query online. Members unable to access UCU's website should contact the membership department at UCU's head offices.

Voting will be by single transferable vote, this means members must number their ballot papers in the order of their preferred candidates ie do not use X to express your vote, use **1** for your most preferred candidate and **2** for your second preference and so on. Full instructions for voting will be included in the ballot mailing.

Use your vote – make UCU the union you want

2007/8 Pay Claim

The FE Committee of the National Executive agreed the following at its meeting on Friday 26 February.

UCU should seek agreement with the other trade unions of the NJF for a joint claim to include the following elements:

- A significant percentage increase on all scales, including some element of a flat rate payment to take account of low pay. To achieve full parity with schoolteachers' pay taking into account the additional allowances awarded to classroom teachers. This increase should be in excess of the current rate of inflation.
- A negotiated agreement on the use of the advanced teaching and training scale.
- An agreed joint strategy to ensure the implementation of the modernised pay arrangement in all colleges.
- To commence negotiations on a national agreement on workloads and work-life balance.

Staff Under Stress

Interim results of a survey of around 5000 staff in FE and HE indicate high levels of stress are widespread amongst staff throughout further education. Staff widely believe that management are contributing to the problem. This evidence will be used to back up our claim (see above) for a national agreement on workloads and work-life balance.

- 82% of respondents reported that their overall workloads had increased in the last three years. The same proportion felt that this had directly or indirectly increased stress levels.
- 92% indicated 'more administration' and 46% said 'having more students per lecturer' were the key causes of increased work.
- Long hours are common: 23.5% of staff in colleges work 46-50 hours and 12.5% of college staff work 50+ hours a week during term time.
- 87% of college respondents said their institution had a management culture which 'actively contributed to stress'

In a recent press release, Roger Kline, UCU head of equality and employment rights, said:

'Across the whole of post-16 education stress is now at epidemic levels. Tackling the causes of stress - excessive workloads, a long hours culture, a lack of influence over their work, job insecurity, a bullying culture and burgeoning administration - is now the top priority for our union. We are now actively seeking legal test cases on excessive hours and against employer's breaching their duty of care to staff, to back up our local campaigns. As student staff ratios rise and bureaucracy rockets, it appears that only collective action and legal threats will serve as a wake up call.'

Members who need support and assistance on stress should contact the **24 hour helpline on 08000 32 99 52** or go to www.cusn.org.uk.

Members who wish to join a network of UCU members interested in sharing information about stress should contact Linda Ball at lball@ucu.org.uk.

Save ESOL Campaign

In October the government announced changes to ESOL programmes. The main changes were that the entitlement for free ESOL provision to level 2 would stop. Fees would be charged from September 2007. Also access to learning for asylum seekers over 19 would also stop. UCU is leading a campaign of many organisations to reverse these decisions. The campaign was launched on 15 January at Britannia St. with over 150 people and over 50 organisations attending and supporting the campaign.

USDAW the shop workers and distributive trades union has organised for a House of Commons Early Day motion to be put down and over 130 MPs have already signed. A lobby of the House of Commons has been arranged for 28 February. All branches are encouraged to send a deputation to the lobby and speak with college management to seek their support. Many branches are organising local actions.

For all the details on the Save ESOL Campaign go to the UCU web site www.ucu.org.uk and hit the 'Save ESOL Campaign' link for the Campaign Declaration, news of local actions, the Early Day Motion, advice on lobbying and other information. Or, contact Sharon Russell, campaign co-ordinator at srussell@ucu.org.uk or call 0207 5203242

Institute for Learning (IfL) elections

The Institute for Learning (Post Compulsory Education and Training - PCET) is the independent, non-statutory professional body for the learning and skills sector. From September 2007 IfL will be required to register all new lecturers holding the license to practice - Qualified Teacher Status Learning and Skills.

Since its inception in 2002 the business of IfL has been directed by a Transitional Council, a co-opted group including Fellows of the Institute and representatives of stakeholder organisations, including UCU. IfL now consider that the organisation has grown sufficiently that elections should now be held to elect members to the full Council. The Electoral Reform Services are going to run an internet election this spring, using the single transferable vote system.

The time table will be:

Nominations close: **26 February 2007**

Voting opens: **19 March 2007**

Voting closes: **2 April 2007**

Results announced: **11 April 2007**

Five full IfL and one IfL associate members will be elected. The remainder of the Council will consist of nine nominated representatives from the stakeholder groups.

Council members are registered at Companies House as the directors of IfL. Business is conducted and vital decisions are made at quarterly board meetings, generally held in London. Attendance at the annual general meeting and any other meeting determined by the Council is also a part of the obligation. There are also opportunities for Council members to participate in the working groups and committees established by the Council. Reasonable travel and accommodation expenses in relation to attending meetings are paid by IfL. A training programme to inaugurate new members into the work of the Institute and their responsibilities is being established. Support for Council members is provided by the company secretary.

In order to stand for election a candidate must:

1. be a full or associate member of the Institute for Learning
2. be fully paid-up on 31st January 2007
3. have the support of two colleagues who are willing to propose and second their nomination.

Nomination forms are available from Charlene Hannon at Electoral Reform Services Limited, The Election Centre, 33 Clarendon Road, London N8 0NW. charlene.hannon@electoralreform.co.uk

Schoolteacher unions encourage their members to stand for election to the schoolteachers' professional body, the GTC. At its meeting on Friday 26 January the National FE Committee decided to bring the IfL elections to the attention of UCU members and encourage those who are also IfL to stand. It is essential that, given the key roles and duties that IfL will have, it is a member run and driven organisation.

New maternity and adoption leave agreements

The existing agreements between the AoC and the FE Unions (ACM, ATL, GMB, TGWU, UCU, UNISON) on maternity leave and adoption leave have been updated to comply with new legislation. The Work and Families Act 2006 brings in a number of improvements over a period of time. The main changes to maternity and adoption leave provision are as follows:

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) will be extended from 26 weeks to 39 weeks. This will apply to women with babies due or a child placed for adoption after 1 April 2007 (from 14 January 2007, mothers-to-be who use the option of starting their Ordinary Maternity Leave up to 11 weeks before their due date have been entitled to this extension). The statutory rate remains the same – 6 weeks at 90% of average earnings, and 33 weeks at flat rate (currently £108.05 a week), or the 90% rate if this is lower.

- From the same dates, the length of service requirement for Additional Maternity Leave (AML) which is unpaid has been removed, so in addition to the 39 weeks of paid leave, all mothers who are employees can choose to take an additional 13 weeks of unpaid leave.
- 'Keeping in Touch' or KIT days have been introduced, giving mothers or adopters the option of going into work for up to 10 mutually agreed days without losing SMP or SAP entitlement.
- All the changes in maternity leave are paralleled in adoption leave.

The AoC agreements reflect all the changes in the law. But there is some improvement on SMP. Contractual maternity pay is:

- 6 weeks at 90% of average weekly earnings
- 12 weeks at 50% of average weekly earnings plus SMP
- The remaining 21 weeks at SMP

ie the middle of those three lines goes beyond the legal requirement.

The agreements also make it very clear that the KIT days are entirely optional, and that the mother or adopter would be paid if she/he chose to work a KIT day.

There are also some useful provisions in the section on Protection of New and Expectant Mothers, some of which go beyond the legal requirements. Not an earth-shaking agreement - but useful.

Please note that also from 1 April 2007, the right to request flexible working has been extended to carers of dependant adults. We have yet to develop an agreement with the AOC on flexible working – it's on the list!

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

Saturday 24 February 2007

Central London - assemble 12 NOON

NO TRIDENT / TROOPS OUT OF IRAQ

CND and Stop the War Coalition have called a national demonstration in London on Saturday 24 February 2007, with the slogans **NO TRIDENT and TROOPS OUT OF IRAQ.** AUT and NATFHE were affiliated to StWC. UCU is affiliated and continues that support.

The timing for this demonstration has been determined by the parliamentary agenda. Parliament will debate and vote on Trident in early March.

Local Stop the War groups and supporters in unions have been asked to do the following to build the widest support for the demonstration:

Leaflets, posters, stickers and postcards publicising the demonstration are available from the national **Stop the War** office. Telephone 020 7278 6694 to place orders. Further details and news: <http://www.stopwar.org.uk/>

UCU MEMBERS are urged to organise college meetings before 24 February. Local StWC groups will be happy to help: <http://www.stopwar.org.uk/new/involved/index.htm>

To join the UCU members network of Stop the War Coalition supporters, email tphillips@ucu.org.uk and put 'join network' in the subject box.