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Pay News

Work on getting the new pay scales implemented in all colleges continues. Just over 70% of colleges now have agreements or are in negotiations with management. Meanwhile our pay claim for 2007/8 will be presented to the employers at a meeting of the National Negotiating forum on the 28 March.

Full copies are available from your branch secretary but in brief the claim calls for:

- A significant percentage increase on all pay scales and allowances including some element of a flat rate payment to take account of low pay. This increase should be in excess of the current rate of inflation and achieve full parity with schoolteachers' pay taking into account the additional allowances awarded to classroom teachers.
- Starting salaries for management and leadership staff to be at least equivalent to that for leadership posts in schools (£34,938 in September 2007) and colleges in Wales.
- An agreed joint strategy to ensure the implementation of the modernised pay arrangements in all colleges.
- A negotiated agreement on the use of Advanced Teaching and Training scale.

The joint trade unions accept that recent pay settlements have made some progress towards restoring pay differentials with comparable occupations and dealing with low pay. In the last 6 months further progress has been made on implementing the 2004/5 Modernising Pay Agreement, but nearly a third of colleges still refuse to implement the new pay scales or even enter talks with the recognised trade unions.

A significant pay increase is required on all scales in 2007 to ensure further progress on rectifying the continuing pay gap with school teachers and other comparable occupations (and to protect progress to date for all staff.) Such an increase must also take into account the rise in the cost of living presently running in excess of 4%.

Figures from the National Statistics 2006 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings indicate a shortfall of 6.3% in average weekly earnings of FE Lecturers compared to secondary schoolteachers.

In addition to pay the claim calls for: ➔

- An agreement to commence negotiations for a national agreement on workloads and work-life balance.
- A maximum 35 hour week.
- A minimum 30 hours a year paid training entitlement for all staff, with release from normal duties to ensure no addition to existing workload.

In support of the need for a national agreement on workloads the claim refers to the mounting evidence that FE staff are suffering ever increasing workloads and stressful working conditions.

Preliminary results of a joint UCU/ATL workload and stress survey published in January indicate:

- The vast majority of respondents consider themselves to be overworked and stressed.
- 82% of respondents report their overall workload had 'gone up' in the last three years.
- 41% work an average of 46 hours or more per week.

Consultations

UCU have submitted responses on the following consultations. They are available from the FE Department at Head Office. Dan Taubman dtaubman@ucu.org.uk

- Proportionate inspection of FE Colleges (OFSTED)
- personalisation agenda in FE (DfES)
- European Credit Framework for Vocational Education (DFES)

Demand-Led Funding

A DfES consultation on the implementation of the Leitch Report on skills development finishes at the end of March. This could result in some of the

most fundamental changes for colleges since incorporation in 1992/3, especially for adult learning. It proposes the virtual end of LSC's planning role and all funding for adult learning, except for the Adult and Community Learning Budget (now called Personal and Community Development Learning, PCDL), will be routed through employers under Train to Gain programmes or through a new version of Learner Accounts.

UCU is drawing up it's response and will strongly oppose these plans which threaten to privatise whole chunks of FE provision through the introduction of extensive market competition under the guise of "widening the provider base". Copies of the UCU response will be available from FE National Official Dan Taubman at dtaubman@ucu.org.uk

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation of the sector is the current buzz word/concept in the sector. If you would like to find more about it please visit www.feselfregulation.org.uk where you will have an opportunity to give your views on Sir George Sweeney's proposals to the Secretary of State on self regulation for the further education sector.

Surveys

The FE Department is conducting or about to conduct surveys prior to the changes in FE initial teacher training and CPD. The first concerns time off for study and advice and guidance for initial teacher trainees. A questionnaire and pre paid envelope is being distributed by some higher education and FE ITT providers. If you are a trainee and receive the questionnaire, please complete it and return to the FE Department.

The second survey is not yet underway. It arises from findings reported in an OFSTED survey of FE initial teacher

training which claimed that they had found significant numbers of FE teacher trainees who did have level two qualifications in literacy and numeracy. UCU wants to ascertain if this finding is correct and has been working with researchers from the National Research Centre for Literacy and Numeracy to devise a questionnaire to be filled in by UCU members in selected FE branches. Because of the sensitivity of this work, we are looking for branch officers and branch learning representatives who could help us with this. If you are interested contact Dan Taubman dtaubman@ucu.org.uk

Annual NIACE & UCU Conference

Professionalising the Literacy, Language and Numeracy Workforce

Wednesday 9 May 2007
Britannia Street Conference
Centre, London

New teacher standards are being drafted and have been consulted on standards for teachers of literacy, language and numeracy are a priority.

This conference will share information about these standards and provide an opportunity for all staff working in literacy, language and numeracy whether part-time or full time, to hear about planned changes as well as current practices which are effective in raising standards of teaching and learning.

For an application form contact Gurjit Kaur, Conferences and Courses Office, NIACE Renaissance House 20 Princess Road West Leicester LE1 6TP

Tel: 0116 204 2833 Fax: 0116 254 8368
Minicom: 0116 255 6049

email: gurjit.kaur@niace.org.uk
Website: www.niace.org.uk

Oppose privatisation in Europe:

Sign the ETUC petition to defend public services

As well as campaigning against privatisation in the UK, UCU is calling on it's members to support a new Europe-wide petition in defence of public services. The ETUC, which organises trade unions at European level, is asking every trade unionist to sign its petition to defend and promote public services in Europe.

Because it is built on trade treaties that promote the free movement of goods, capital and services, the EU has never had a legal framework within which national governments can defend vital public services.

This means that public services are always vulnerable to directives from the Commission that compel them to open up services to private companies through 'liberalisation'. The ETUC has launched a campaign to build support for a Directive that will enshrine the principles of the public sector in the working of the European Union, making universal access to public services a right of all citizens of Europe and defending national public services from further private sector encroachment.

A first step in this campaign is to build a Europe-wide petition of a million signatures. Please add your name to the petition now.

Click here to sign the petition.

www.petitionpublicservice.eu/

For more information on this campaign, click here:

www.etuc.org/a/3088

Tribunal vindicates MANCAT five

The employment appeal tribunal has upheld an employment tribunal's decision that five former NATFHE branch activists were unfairly dismissed for trade union activities.

Branch secretary Geoff Brown and fellow reps Joan Lynch, Aly McIntyre, Alan Sivori and Geoff Smith were sacked in August 2004 Manchester College of Arts and Technology (MANCAT) suddenly closed the trade union education unit where they worked in August 2004. The original Manchester tribunal found that, while there was a genuine redundancy situation, the college senior management was clearly motivated to get rid of the activists. The college appealed on the grounds that the tribunal should have accepted the 'business case' for closing the unit. The EAT has rejected that argument. UCU regional official Colin Gledhill hopes that the college will now accept the decision and help rebuild industrial relations as it moves towards probable merger with City College Manchester.

'The underlying problem always was an FE planning and funding system that compels college chiefs to strive endlessly for success and savings, and to stifle dissent from unions who presume to question corporation policies and who dare to protect individual members' rights. '

UCU has a large membership in MANCAT and the regional office has been working very hard to rebuild branch structures at a crucial time for the college with the tribunal result and talks of a possible merger with City College Manchester. Joint meetings with management have now been re-established with positive results. This includes 10 hours facility time for members who want to be branch reps and agreement for UCU to hold a meeting in the next few months at every site. Most importantly MANCAT now has a new branch rep who has been working with the regional UCU office to rebuild the branch. A recent newsletter encouraging members to get involved has resulted in at least 6 more members coming forward to help the branch.

The College and University Support Network (CUSN) has had 3,830 visitors to its website since its launch at the end of October. CUSN, set up by a partnership of UCU and Teacher Support Network, offers round-the-clock telephone counselling, fact sheets, online coaching, money advice and needs-based grants and loans specifically for college and university academic and related staff and their families.

Out of all the calls/emails in this period, the top issues were:

- Working conditions - 30.5%
- Money - 30.5%
- Careers - 10%
- People and relationships - 9%
- Information call - 7.5%
- Health and wellbeing - 7%
- Personal - 5.5%

More details at www.cusn.info
Branches and Local Associations will have received boxes of leaflets and posters from CUSN. Please take every opportunity to distribute these among your members.

Nominations for TUC awards 2007

The TUC wishes to demonstrate and acknowledge the range of work currently undertaken by lay union representatives, and is inviting nominations for the following awards:

- Organising award - the trade unionist who has done most to improve workplace organisation
- Women's Gold Badge - the rank and file woman member who is considered to have the best record of trade union and community/voluntary work
- Safety Rep award - the trade unionist who represents the best aspects of being a safety representative
- TUC Learning Rep award - the trade unionist who represents the most positive aspects of being a learning representative.

If you wish to nominate someone for one of these awards, please contact jnicholds@ucu.org.uk for further details **by Monday 16 April.**