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HE News bids Joint Presidents farewell

HE News takes this opportunity to recognise the work of UCU's first presidents; Dr Steve Wharton, University of Bath and Dr Dennis Hayes, Canterbury Christchurch University, and to thank them for their key contributions in shaping the future of UCU following the merger of AUT and NATFHE, as their term office comes to an end on 31 May 2007. In the first UC (magazine for members) published in June 2006, Steve and Dennis in one voice invited and welcomed members to work with the new union. Steve (former AUT) took sabbatical leave from Bath to carry out duties as joint president at UCU where during that time he also served as joint chair of the Transitional Arrangements Committee (TAC) and the Higher Education Committee (HEC). Dennis (former NATFHE) who also serves on the UCU Branch Committee at Canterbury Christ Church University brought a wealth of knowledge to UCU on Higher Education and Further Education issues as joint president. *We wish them well as they have both come to the end of this tenure as joint presidents however UCU will no doubt be continuing to work with them and benefit from their experience.*

On UCU Congress – UCU's Congress, which is just around the corner, will take place from 30 May to 1 June at the Bournemouth International Centre. Speakers including Sally Hunt and Paul Mackney, UCU joint General Secretaries, Bill Rammel, Minister of State (Department of Education & Skills), Frances O'Grady, TUC Deputy General Secretary, Eberto Diaz, Colombian Trade Union Leader, Mark Serwotka, General Secretary of PCS will address the event. Meetings of the Higher Education and Further Education Sectors as well as official fringes will also take place. Read more on <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2392>

Nominations now called for Congress Business Committee and Appeal Panel: Details have been emailed to branch secretaries for nominations. The first is for eight members of the Congress Business Committee (CBC), the committee that orders Congress motions for debate - see <http://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu19.html> - nominations for CBC can be made up until the end of the first session of the Sector Conferences that take place during Congress on 31 May. The second is for 15 Appeal Panel members – the branch circular explains the panel’s important role, see <http://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu20.html> Appeal Panel nominations must be submitted ahead of Congress, by 12 noon on 24 May.

JNCHES Review – Talks Continue

The working review of the structure and functions of JNCHES met again on 17 May. Some progress was made on organisational matters such as a possible disputes procedure, a structure of sub-committees and annual arrangements to order meetings so that the consistent attendance of employers representatives is more assured. The vexed question of one or two pay bargaining tables remains unresolved and the employers appear reluctant to progress the need to ensure that JNCHES keeps the Framework agreement under constant review.

At its meeting on 11 May UCU’s Higher Education Committee discussed the position taken by the employers and the non-academic unions on the prospect of a single table for negotiating pay. The committee saw no reason to depart from the existing policies of AUT and NATFHE and agreed that there should be a separate table to deal with the pay of academic and academic related staff.

The JNCHES working group meets again on 13 June and is due to report to JNCHES on 12 July.

Revision of guidance on the calculation of hourly rates of pay - The UCU guidance on how to calculate hourly rates of pay has recently been revised and the new guidance can be found on the UCU web site at http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/l/o/ucu_hourlyrates.pdf

Branches and local association are advised to remove the previous guidance from the packs that were recently circulated and replace with the new guidance. The new guidance revises the consideration for holiday pay in the pre-92 sector and it is important that colleagues in the pre-92 sector follow the new guidance in their on-going negotiations with management.

The guidance for the post-92 sector remains covered by a national agreement which can be seen at http://www.ucea.ac.uk/ucea/filemanager/root/site_assets/jnches/JNCHES_Hourly-paid_Lecturers_Guidance.pdf

Thanks to the work of colleagues at UCL, in particular Sean Wallis, for their input.



Celebrating Life Changers: Over 150 people gathered in the heart of Westminster to celebrate the power of education at the first ever Endsleigh/UCU Life Changer celebration which was held at Church House on Wednesday 16 May from 7 – 10pm. The UCU Life Changers awards aim to highlight the work that members do every day to unlock potential and transform lives. Each of the Life Changers received

£300 to donate to an educational project or charity which reflects the spirit of the awards. Two of the recipients Dick Hobbs and Joe Baden were nominated by their fellow Life Changers to receive a grant of £3000 to donate to a project of their choice, both of whom were recognised by the union for the work they did in changing people's lives throughout education. UCU joint general secretary, Sally Hunt, said: *The stories and nominations that we have received have been quite outstanding and incredibly inspirational. There are so many people out there in our universities and colleges literally transforming people's lives on a daily basis*'. To read all about the Life Changers stories go to:

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/6/g/ucu_lifechangers07.pdf

Get involved with Life Changers: UCU is building a coalition of staff, students, professional bodies, parents, politicians, parents and the public to argue for greater recognition of the role of further and higher education. The coalition has already received support from a number of learned societies and education related charities including, the Social History Society, the Royal Geographical Society and Deafness Research UK. We have also received the individual support of amongst others, Lord Ashley of Stoke and Andrew Motion, Poet Laureate. To join the coalition go to: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1796> and for full information on Life Changers go to www.ucu.org.uk/lifechangers

NHS cuts hit university jobs and services

- In the run up to UCU Congress the union is highlighting the impact upon universities of reductions in spending on education and training by strategic health authorities. A Council of Deans for Nursing and the Health Professions survey carried out last year found an average cut in the numbers of new students in nursing, midwifery and the allied health professions of around 10% in 2006/07 over previous years. Many universities have been warned of further reductions in funding for student training. For 2007/08, at least four Strategic Health Authorities have announced their intention

to once again raid training budgets in order to shore up overall deficits. This is bad news for our members who face redundancy or the prospect of working in a context of staff shortages. However, it is also bad news for patients. University staff have helped to deliver a massive expansion of training for new health professionals in recent years in order to meet the demands of the NHS.

Now, many fear a return to the boom and bust of the nineties with random raiding of training budgets destabilizing the support infrastructure needed by the NHS. We are launching an open letter to Lord Hunt, the

Minister responsible for NHS Workforce Planning and building momentum on the issue as we move towards *UCU Congress at the end of May*. Many thanks to all those of you who have provided information - please ensure that all UCU members in departments that provide medical training are aware of this. We also need information from your institution. If you are aware of any **cuts** in your university arising from cuts in the NHS training budget, please let us know via jstephens@ucu.org.uk

Arrangements for the support of the POST-92 FRAMEWORK NEGOTIATIONS

Arrangements are being made to recruit to the vacancy created by Andy Pike who left UCU in April to take up an offer with IMPACT in Ireland. The recruitment process for replacing Andy is likely to take some time while the need to complete the negotiation of Framework implementation agreements is now more important than ever.

For the meantime Iain Owens from the UCU's Gateshead Office will act in support of the Framework negotiations for post-92 institutions. Iain is available to advise on negotiations and issues relating to Framework Implementation.

The responsibility for completing the Framework implementation within regions remains with Regional Offices. In the event of any major negotiating difficulties such as those likely to result in a formal dispute, Iain will support the local negotiators in a national role.

Proposed agreements should be referred by Regional Offices to Iain in the first

instance. Prior to submission to the Ratification Panel, regional offices are asked to provide a commentary on the agreements for the Panel and Iain will advise on the likelihood of the Panel ratifying any agreement. Iain Owens can be reached on iowens@ucu.org.uk

New Appointments – Birmingham Office

There have been two new appointments to the Birmingham office. Julie Cooper is presently the acting Regional Support Official, effective 1 May.

Michelle Dean will take up the post of regional administrator at Birmingham (former NATFHE office) from 11 June.

Trade Union Activities - There is wide variation in the facilities higher education institutions provide for trade union activities. Many institutions, to promote good working relations, make office space available and give UCU officials paid time off for their union work. Others are not so helpful.

Data gathered for the UCU's on-line conditions of employment database shows, for example, that Sunderland University allows the paid full-time equivalent of 1.3 lecturers for trade union activities. The University of Derby provides 620 paid hours a year for TU activities and the Open University gives activists 200 paid days a year. Alternatively, the university may make a specific amount of funding available to the union to cover activities. Other employers, such as the University of Gloucestershire, are not so precise: they provide 'reasonable' paid time off with pay for officers. Many employers also give time

off for training for TU representatives. In addition to paid time off for UCU officers, many institutions provide office space and other facilities. For example, the University of Plymouth gives use of a photocopier, telephone, meeting space, printing, storage, travelling expenses and typing facilities.

To view the data currently available, go to <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1844> and follow the links to 'union facilities'. If you have information of a trade union facilities agreement at your institution, please provide that via the database.

Implementing the Gender Equality Duty - HEI's should have published their gender equality schemes by April 30th. Anecdotal evidence suggests that not all of them have done so. There is also a legal requirement for them to consult with trade unions. Again, this does not seem to have happened everywhere. One tool that you might find useful in getting your institution to work with you towards implementing the Gender Equality Duty [GED] is a Joint Agreement. UCU has been attempting to get the relatively new JNCHES Equality Forum to adopt this approach, but progress is slow. However, in FE, there is a national agreement which you might find helpful. With the snappy title of "*Joint Agreement on Guidance for Gender Equality in Employment for Further Education Colleges*", it was agreed between the Association of Colleges [the FE employers' organisation] and the recognised FE unions, including UCU, in March. An earlier agreement has been fully updated to reflect the requirements of the GED. For example, as well as all the well-established areas, such as Recruitment and Selection, Career Development, Maternity Rights etc, it has sections on Ensuring Equality between Women and Men, The Gender Equality Scheme, Impact Assessment, etc. It is a very useful agreement, and beyond changing "college" to "university", few changes are needed to make it applicable to HEI's. It can be found on the website at www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/f/t/fe_gendereq_mar07_1.doc

{Incidentally there is a full range of these FE agreements, covering all the equality strands, also available on the Equality pages of the website}

You might find it a useful way of getting your institution to fully engage with you on the GED to put this agreement [with whatever revisions you think are necessary for local purposes] on the negotiating agenda at your HEI. Finally, a reminder that the UCU Guidance on the GED is available at www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/6/0/ucu_gedguidance_jan07_1.doc

NEWS BRIEF * NEWS BRIEF * NEWS BRIEF***NEWS BRIEF**

BOURNEMOUTH - Serious difficulties have been discovered at Bournemouth University where it appears that the university has for some time been offering contracts which seriously depart from the national contract for post 92 universities.

Negotiations are now under way but the university remains reluctant to withdraw the offending terms of its local contract which does not include any cap on contact hours and offers five days leave less than the national contract.

Malcolm Keight Head of Higher Education said *"the national contract is the cornerstone of protection against excessive workloads and unreasonable demands on academic staff. UCU will not tolerate any employer departing from its key conditions."*

With UCU's first Congress about to be held at Bournemouth this dispute is likely to draw the particular attention of delegates.

UCU addresses redundancies at

Thames Valley University - The Union has been engaged in consultation regarding a significant number of redundancies at this institution. The University management refuse to rule out the possibility of compulsory redundancies, but at this stage are working with the Union to avoid the need for such an eventuality.

UCU & London Metropolitan

University - Management at London Met remain apparently rooted in the 19th century in their approach to industrial relations. UCU members at London Met are faced with an uncommunicative and intransigent employer which claims not to recognize UCU following the merger of AUT and NATFHE. This incredible position, coupled with the creation of a staff consultation forum, looks likely to lead UCU to enter a dispute with the University on a range of outstanding substantive issues. The UCU Co-Ordinating Committee is developing an organizing and campaigning strategy to deal with this situation, and will be seeking to show the positive contribution that a representative, independent union can make.

Scottish National Party wins amid confusion - The Scottish Parliament

Elections, which took place on Thursday 3 May, caused confusion for voters, MSPs and for the future of the UK.

The voter confusion was caused by the three ballot papers and two different voting systems. A voter preference numbering was used for council elections while a single cross is used for the Scottish Parliament elections for the combination of constituency seats and regional top-ups seats. However many voters also used numbers instead of crosses leading to about 150 000 spoilt papers for the Scottish Parliament election.

In the election SNP emerged as the biggest party with 47 MSPs and a one seat lead over Labour. However, the Liberal Democrats with 16 MSPs did not gain enough seats to form a coalition and in any case are reluctant to form a rainbow coalition as they oppose the SNP's main pledge of a referendum on independence. The Green party lost seats and now have only 2 MSPs but have entered into a formal agreement to support the SNP, while the socialist parties lost all their seats.

The SNP will now form a minority government with policy made on a case by case basis. So policy on higher education and all other matters is presently in flux as the SNP attempt to work out which manifesto policies can be implemented with the approval of the other parties. Their proposal for an independence referendum will not gain approval but the performance of the SNP in government could determine the future of the UK.