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2007/8 England pay offer consultation

The Association of Colleges (AoC) has made a final pay offer for England for this year.

In summary of the offer is:

- 2% on all salaries and allowances from 1 August 2007
- A further 1% from 1 February 2008
- Joint statement on the implementation of new pay scales
- Negotiations on a Joint Agreement on Training and Development
- Negotiations on a National Joint Agreement on Guidance on Work Life Balance and Working Time
- Case studies on how colleges use the Advanced Teacher and Training scale with a view to providing examples of good practice.

The Further Education Committee (FEC) of the National Executive discussed the offer on Friday 6 July but decided it was unable to accept the offer on behalf of members as the increase fell below the current rate of inflation and would, in effect, result in a pay cut. The FEC decided that all branches in England should be fully consulted on the

offer in the period leading up to a special pay conference to be held on 6 October.

The special pay conference made up of delegates from branches, will decide on whether the union accepts or rejects the 2007/08 offer. It will also consider the union's claim for 2008/09. If the offer for 2007/08 is rejected at the conference a ballot for a program of industrial action would follow.

Action Points

- All branches are asked to make arrangements for a meeting of members to take place before 28 September.
- This branch meeting should determine whether members should reject or accept the 2007/08 offer as the best that can be achieved by negotiation.
- If rejecting the offer, branches should indicate what industrial action should be pursued by the union.
- The branch meeting should also consider motions for the special pay conference in relation to the union's claim for 2008/09.

Make sure that you attend your branch meeting and have YOUR SAY ON PAY!

Do you deliver HE in the FE sector?

With the growth of new foundation degrees more Higher Education than ever will be delivered in the FE sector. UCU's Developing Activist Network (DAN) is establishing a new partnership email network for members who deliver HE in the FE sector where members can discuss the issues that concern them. Also under development is an area of the web within DAN where members will be able to access key resources.

If you are interested in joining this network, contact John Offord, UCU's new policy officer for cross-sectoral issues. John can be contacted at jofford@ucu.org.uk.

Please copy your message to Justine Stephens at jstephens@ucu.org.uk.

Industrial action round up

In addition to disputes at Harlow and Oxford and Cherwell colleges there are a number of other branches that have or intend balloting for industrial action to defend jobs against the threat of redundancies including:

- Hackney
- Barnet
- Epping Forest
- Preston
- Liverpool Community
- City of Sunderland

Craven College branch will ballot members in September over the college's failure to pay the 2006/07 pay award and members at Barnsley College will vote to take action in support of a colleague who the branch believe has been unfairly sacked.

All Northern Ireland College branches also continue to be in dispute over pay with six days of action already taken.

Harlow College - UCU branch keeps up the fight

Harlow College UCU Branch remain strong despite the loss of many colleagues. A new committee has been elected and the branch is determined to continue their fight into the new academic year against imposed contracts which slash their terms and conditions.

Over 80 members and up to 100 staff have now voted with their feet at Harlow College either taking redundancy or being dismissed for refusing to sign the imposed contract which places no limits on teaching hours. This represents nearly two thirds of the college's teaching staff.

The Harlow College branch has received overwhelming support from UCU members across the country during this dispute. A UCU rally in Harlow town centre in support of Harlow College members campaign, was well attended by branches from London and beyond. This was followed by the branch taking 5 days of industrial action.

Parent and community concern at the contract dispute and the college's ability to deliver it's full course offering in the New Year came to a head during a lobby of local MP Bill Rammell at a public meeting he held on Friday 6 July.

Following calls from Bill Rammell the local MP (who is also the Government minister responsible for Further Education) the local Learning and Skills Council is investigating the ability of the college to deliver it's course programme.

Further negotiations have been scheduled with management of the college and UCU national officials. UCU members are advised not to apply for vacancies at Harlow College while the contract dispute continues. The placing of teaching staff on "tutor" support staff contracts and the imposition of contracts that slash holiday entitlements and place no limit on teaching hours cannot be recommended by UCU.

Oxford and Cherwell Valley College

UCU tell college – 'Implement national pay agreement'

UCU members at Oxford and Cherwell Valley College recently staged a high profile lunchtime protest outside college entrances to draw attention to the failure of the college to properly implement the national FE pay agreement.

The lively protest was co-ordinated across three sites with over 40 UCU members turning out in Oxford and 15 in Banbury. The branch sent a press release to the local media and produced a leaflet for the public.

They explained that pay for lecturing staff at further education colleges has fallen well behind their school teacher colleagues.

A branch spokesperson said, *'Three years ago, when the college wanted all it's teaching staff to agree to new conditions of service, they used the national pay scale as a carrot to persuade lecturers to sign up. Since then, however, they've refused to honour national pay deals in full and we've seen our pay fall behind that of lecturers in other parts of the country.'*

The branch plans further protests until management heed their call for fair pay.



The College and University Support Network (CUSN)

has had over 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.