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FROM TUC CONGRESS 2007 Sally Hunt told delegates at the TUC Congress which is took place from the 10th - 13th September 2007 at the Brighton Centre, that lifelong learning must be at the centre of the government's strategy for education and skills. Speaking on a motion about the recent Leitch review, the UCU general secretary challenged the government to 'match rhetoric with reality' and 'put lifelong learning back where it belongs at the centre of policy'. Condemning the cuts to adult education budgets including to ESOL English classes, Sally Hunt said: "This is a time to invest in adult and community education for life not cut it. Yet in 2006 there were 14% less learners in further education than the previous year.

"Government policy must be about opening doors, not shutting them, yet UCU members report that enrolment for English classes is collapsing because of cuts in funding. The cuts in these classes hit the unemployed, the vulnerable, and those on low wages the hardest. They deny future generations the tools required to lift them out of poverty. We in the trade union movement must stand for education as the great liberator. It is a worker's right – not grace and favour to be granted by an employer."

UCU ANNUAL NATIONAL MEETINGS – GET

REGISTERED NOW! - UCU will be holding its annual national member meetings during autumn 2007. These meetings will be an opportunity for members to meet with colleagues in order to discuss important issues and help direct UCU policy. More information on all meetings can be found at: -

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2669>. If you would like to attend the **academic-related (Wednesday 17 October), the fixed-term and hourly paid (Friday 26**



October), the medical research council (Wednesday 31 October) and the post-92 (Friday 23 November) annual meetings, please note these dates and click on the relevant meeting from the link above. Full details will be provided on registration, deadlines, nomination of committee members and submission of motions. The designated contact person can be emailed should you want to know more.

A special sector conference will also take place on 9 November. The Higher education committee has resolved to convene this special meeting of the HE sector conference to consider issues arising from the current review of Joint Negotiating Machinery for Higher Education Staff. Negotiations were suspended on the

12 July to provide UCU members with the opportunity to discuss the latest proposals for the revised national negotiating machinery. More on <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2762>

CHAIR APPOINTED FOR THE FINANCIAL REVIEW - As part of the 2006 pay deal there was agreement for a joint Financial Review of HE funding and salary levels follow the implementation of the 2004 Framework Agreement. Baroness Rennie Fritchie has agreed to chair the review. Baroness Fritchie who is a crossbencher in the House of Lords was until recently UK Commissioner for Public Appointments and has held various appointments in the public and private sectors. An application has been made to the DIUS for funding support for the Review.

NEWS ON LONDON METROPOLITAN - After an intense period of negotiations with management at London Metropolitan University (LMU) the signs are the long running dispute over union recognition could be finally at an end. Throughout August the UCU negotiating team have thrashed out agreements which cover recognition, facilities and a disputes procedure. The UCU negotiators will recommend to the membership at LMU that the agreements be accepted.

From a starting point of open hostility and mutual mistrust and with plans well under way for a ballot on industrial action and grey listing of LMU it is remarkable that we have come so far in such a short period of time. In July UCU negotiators and LMU management took part in a meeting facilitated by the TUC.

The outcome of this meeting was a joint statement accepting that UCU was recognised and that negotiations on the mechanics of recognition would commence.

UCU negotiators have since met with management six times in often difficult and challenging circumstances but have at last achieved agreements that appear to be acceptable. The normalisation of industrial relations at LMU is a direct result of the zest, energy and intelligence of the lay negotiators who have given up much of their summer vacation, a solid, resolute and organised membership galvanised by an effective internal and external campaign.

Barry Jones, Assistant General Secretary, London North says "Now that this battle is over, we can start to deal with the issues

the rest of HE has been concerned with, and responding to management properly on, such as the framework agreement, PRP

and possible job cuts. This is where the real work starts!"

PARTNERSHIP WORKING – CARRYING OUT EQUAL PAY REVIEWS - We have long campaigned for institutions to carry out equal pay reviews as part of our campaign against the pay gap(s) in HE and both the Framework Agreement and the 2006 pay settlement recommended that institutions carry out such reviews in partnership with the local trade unions. As part of their partnership project, JNCHES is providing a series of fully-funded joint training seminars on equal pay reviews. The invitations have gone to heads of HEI's and HR directors, asking them to nominate HR managers and trade union representatives to attend the events. The aim of the seminars is to help institutions to undertake equal pay reviews in line with the JNCHES guidance, and in partnership with trade unions. The dates and locations of the seminars are:

- Durham – 09 October
- Manchester – 11 October
- London – 06 November
- Cardiff – 08 November
- Edinburgh – 06 December

If your HR department has not contacted your branch / LA about these events, make clear that you want a UCU representative to attend. To inform the seminars the UCEA is asking for examples of institutional good practice in this area. If you have anything to report about an equal pay review carried out in line with the JNCHES guidance, and the outcomes and actions of the review, please get in touch with Rachel Curley at rcurley@ucu.org.uk

WORKING TIME REGULATIONS – exemption for workers on unmeasured time revoked - The Working Time Regulations 1998 limit the maximum working time a worker can be required to work in a 7 day period to 48 hours and specify minimum annual leave requirements.

Although UCU had always argued that the Regulations apply to academic and related staff, some institutions took the view that the derogation for workers on unmeasured time took academic and related staff with no specified contractual hours, outside of the scope of the regulations.

The exemption for unmeasured time was revoked in April 2006 but we understand that a number of pre-92 employers are still relying on this exemption and are still

referring to it in their handbooks and advice materials.

Local associations and branches in pre-92 institutions should check that their employer accepts that they are covered by the Working Time Regulations. This does not, of course, mean that the UCU accepts a working time of up to 48 hours - working hours for academic and related staff should be at a level such that a work-life balance can be maintained.

FIXED-TERM CONTRACTS AND RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS - The UCU has, for some considerable time, been challenging the presumption that research staff in Universities are offered only fixed-term contracts and have very little opportunity for security of employment and career advancement. Some progress has been made in the light of the fixed-term

employment regulations. We were therefore concerned to find out that one of the research councils (NERC) was instructing employing institutions to offer fixed-term contracts when awarding fellowships. Following intervention by the

UCU, the NERC have agreed to change their fellowship announcement letter. Thanks to the member concerned for bringing this to our attention and to NERC for responding so quickly and positively. Does anyone have any more examples?

THE DISABILITY RIGHTS COMMISSION (DRC) has recently published "*Understanding the Disability Discrimination Act - a guide for colleges, universities and adult community learning providers in Great Britain*". The guidance is unique and comprehensive in that it covers all aspects of the DDA relevant to colleges, universities and adult education providers in England, Scotland and Wales. It is 160 pages in length and covers an institution's legal duties as an employer of disabled people; as a provider of services to the public; as a provider of education services to students and it covers the institution's responsibility to promote disability equality across the whole range of its functions and to produce a disability equality scheme. It includes good practice information about how various functions of an institution might implement these duties.

The publication is available to order free in hard copy and on USB stick from the DRC Helpline until the end of September 2007. If you would like to order copies please contact the Helpline and quote the name of the guidance and code EDU23.

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GENDER PAY GAP - Latest research by UCU into the gap between average pay for female academics compared with their male colleague's shows sharp differences among higher education institutions. Nationally, average pay for females was 14.1% lower than for male academics in 2005-6, a figure which has gradually reduced from a high point of 15.6% in 1999-2000. At institutional level in 2005-6 there was a range of pay gaps from 0.3% (at Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh), to 30.3% (at St George's Hospital, London) in favour of male academics in 2005-6. Only one institution (University of the Arts, London) had a gender pay gap in favour of female academics.

In terms of university groupings, the biggest gap, of 18.5% on average, was at institutions belonging to the research-intensive Russell Group. The next widest gap, of 15.4%, was at 'non-aligned' pre-92 universities, closely followed by a 15.0% gap at institutions belonging to the 1994 Group of smaller research-focused universities.

At the other end of the pay gap spectrum were the universities established after 1992 – the post-92 institutions – where there was a 6.8% gap on average. The narrowest gap, of 5.6%, was at higher education colleges and specialist higher education institutions.

NEW UCU SCOTLAND OFFICERS FACE THE NEW SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT - UCU Scotland has new Officers who, amongst their first jobs, have opened a constructive relationship with Scotland's new, minority SNP, Government. And, whereas Labour and the LibDems in coalition were officially known as the Scottish Executive, Alex Salmond's SNP have made it known that they will insist on the title "Scottish Government". At least we will now be able to

avoid confusion between our own, UCU “Scottish Executive” and the people running the country – or trying to do so!

Terry Brotherstone, a historian at Aberdeen University, is the new UCU Scotland President. Terry hopes to visit Local Associations in Scotland whether to meet Committees or speak at General Meetings. Look out for his forthcoming article in **October’s “UC”**. He is joined by Angela Roger, of Dundee University’s School of Education, who is the new Honorary Secretary, Lesley McIntosh of Robert Gordon University’s School of Life Sciences is the Vice President, while Alastair Hunter and Susan Ashworth, both of Glasgow University, continue as Officers – Past President and Treasurer respectively.

The Officers have already held constructive discussions with the new Cabinet Secretary responsible for education including higher education, Fiona Hyslop. Ms Hyslop has shown herself ready to hear our views and, we hope, to work with us over the coming months. One possibility to be explored by the Officers will be for UCU Scotland to sponsor a seminar taking a fresh look at the distinctive contribution which higher education can make in Scottish society. Times are certainly changing and, though the “first 100 days” of SNP Government have arguably been the easiest they will face, there have been some early wins for UCU Scotland. The graduate endowment (fee payable after graduation) will be abolished. Asylum seekers will be treated as home students, so those who have been at school in Scotland can now afford to go on to university. Glasgow University’s provision in Dumfries has been saved. From here on in, it gets more difficult. But UCU Scotland’s Officers are ready to work with “our” Scottish Executive and to face the challenge.

VICTORY AT CRICHTON CAMPUS - The University and College Union (UCU) Scotland celebrated the Scottish Executive’s announcement of additional funding to allow Glasgow University to remain and even grow provision at the Crichton Campus in Dumfries.

In February Glasgow University announced that it was halting admission of undergraduates to Crichton Campus. A decision that would have led to the University stopping all its provision at the campus and the removal of Arts and Humanities from the curriculum.

But the new SNP administration moved promptly to announce £1.5 million of additional targeted funding for the campus, meaning that Glasgow University can now continue to operate at Crichton Campus. The separate funding of the infrastructure at Crichton led to Glasgow University announcing that it would re-open undergraduate admissions from next year.

UCU Scotland President Terry Brotherstone said: “UCU Scotland is delighted that the determination of the Crichton campus staff to continue to provide high quality university education in south west Scotland has been rewarded by the new Scottish government. This is what we have been pressing for throughout. No one should drop their guard, however. We welcome assurances that no jobs will be lost, but we shall remain vigilant against any future attempt to impose redundancies once the spotlight has been removed.

Congratulations to all our Crichton colleagues and their students on their splendid campaign.”

Further Information on the campaign is on the Glasgow University web pages at <http://www.gla.ac.uk/Staff/GAUT/>

NOMINATIONS FOR the highly successful 2008 LIFE CHANGERS has started again: The Life Changers campaign celebrates the life-transforming potential of further and higher education and the Awards help to illuminate the amazing work being undertaken by our members every day. You can find out more about UCU's highly successful Life Changers campaign, read about last year's winners, or nominate someone now on: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1788>

FINANCIAL WARNING! - *SIPPS (Self Investment Personal Pensions)*-Members have reported being approached by Financial Advisors who suggest moving their AVC funds or pension into SIPPS. This might be a good idea if you have a fund of £100,000 plus or are a long way from retirement. But it is wise to take advice.

STAFF CHANGES WITHIN THE HE TEAM – HE News welcomes onboard *Michael MacNeil* who joined UCU on 3 September as Assistant General Secretary within the HE team. Michael will take lead responsibility on a number of key areas including post-92 institutions.

A hearty welcome back to *Rachel Curley* who has returned from maternity leave and resumed her post as Assistant General Secretary in the team. Rachel will resume her role, leading the completion of the Framework implementation in the pre-92 institutions and developing policy in equal pay. *Jane Thompson*, who has been acting AGS during Rachel's maternity leave, will resume her role as policy officer. Jane has done an excellent job in covering a very busy period while Rachel was on leave.

Moray McAulay remains part of the team as Policy Officer until December 2007 responsible for special projects. We are pleased that *Christine Bernabe* continues on a temporary basis as Secretary to the HE team and to Bernadette Newman, National Head of Finance. Christine is also responsible for HE News so any items & photos you wish to be included should be sent to cbernabe@ucu.org.uk.

UCU has asked Hewitt's (actuary firm) to provide general advice on whether or not this is a good investment and how best to improve your pension position. Take the time to read it. You can ask your branch rep for a copy, or check UCU website for the advise www.ucu.org.uk under pensions or email pensions@ucu.org.uk for a copy.

IPP (Individual Personal Pensions) - These are funds whose charges are not as high as SIPPS normally 2-2.7%, which enables self investment or management investment. Whilst they may be considered as a financial product for young investors, for the mature person the administration costs are likely to reduce any benefit and members are advised to seek alternative independent financial advice before moving any money.