

Conference Rejects Pay Offer

Ballot for Strike Action

On Saturday delegates from 99 FE branches attended a Special Pay Conference to discuss the 2007/8 pay offer from the AoC. (2% from August 2007 and 1% from February 2008) The conference received a report on the consultation exercise with branches (see box below) and a recommendation from the FE committee of the national executive to reject the offer. After a lively debate conference decided to reject the offer and to ballot all members on taking industrial action starting with a one day strike.

Preparations for a national ballot early in November start immediately. More information will be available shortly but the first task is to ensure that our membership records are up to date in order to comply with employment law.

Any member who has recently changed details such as address, workplace or grade should contact their branch officers as soon as possible

A number of motions were passed at the conference which indicated broad acceptance of the following position recommended by the FEC.

"This Special Pay Conference rejects the latest pay offer of 2.55% from the AoC. UCU FE members should not be expected to accept this insulting offer which is less than RPI (which rose in August to 4.1%) and amounts to a pay cut. Conference believes that no pay award less than the RPI in the current pay round will be acceptable.

In making this decision Conference is also mindful of the fact that FE lecturers are still paid around 6% less on average than schoolteachers, that last year 37% of Principals awarded themselves higher pay rises than their staff, and that pay awards and bonuses for bosses have reached unprecedented heights. Conference calls on the FEC to immediately organise a nationally-aggregated ballot of FE members to determine whether they wish to instigate industrial action in pursuit of a fair pay award. The ballot form will be accompanied by material informing members of the Special Pay Conference decision and urging them to vote yes for industrial action.

If the ballot delivers a Yes majority the FEC will initiate a programme of escalating industrial action beginning with a national one day strike and will attempt to coordinate this strike with other public sector workers taking action over pay."

Branch consultation on pay offer

190 branches responded (nearly 70%) **92** indicated that they wished to accept the offer
82 indicated rejection of the offer

In addition 2 colleges had tied votes in their branches and 11 colleges indicating abstention.