

**Welcome to the latest edition of Landbased News. It has been some time since the last edition. This is because members on the committee have themselves been involved in many of the issues that face members up and down the country – overwork, redundancies, mergers, new programmes and cuts to programmes.**

Tired, overworked and bullied staff don't have that 'sparkle' that motivates and inspires students. Yet even in the Landbased sector (perhaps even more so?) UCU is seeing increases in individual and collective casework that often has a detrimental effect on the morale of staff and students.

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## UCU at the Royal Agricultural Show Stoneleigh

Members of the Landbased Committee braved the cold and rain to attend a UCU Landbased meeting at the Royal Agricultural Show and it's a good job that they did, because the inclement weather caused the abandonment of the show the very next day – after all, it was July 2007!

Despite the weather, Bernice Waugh, (NEC member and Chair of the Committee), along with Christiane Ohsan, (the National Official), warmly welcomed UCU members to what proved to be quite an eventful day, starting with the transportation from the car parks to the showground. Along with other members of the public, we were ferried (bounced) on open trailers towed by tractors, with bits of sod and grass flying everywhere. The journey was only a few minutes but we were all nervously laughing as we reached the entrance

with thoughts of the return journey pushed to one side.

When we met up with the other members it was agreed that there was a fine display of newly purchased Wellingtons to walk through the mire that in places rivalled the infamous mud at Glastonbury. Umbrellas were another popular buy.

The committee met on Tuesday 3 July at 2pm at the NPTC building in the showground. It was agreed that despite the small attendance it was a venue and occasion that was worth repeating next year. Details will be posted on the website.

After the meeting, Committee Members, Chris Dyke, Gill Evans from Coleg Sir Gar, Bernice and Christiane visited a number of stands, including Harper Adams and Hartbury Colleges, where we

had a chance to talk to UCU members, leave bags of UCU materials and did our bit to recruit a couple of non-members. This was repeated at Reading University and the Royal Agricultural College stands. We explained who we were, why we were there, and how UCU could become more active within their institutions.

As the day drew to a close, the weather had improved dramatically, and you would swear that it was as warm as early March!

Oh! And back to the tractor-ride, equally hair raising and mud caking, with fingers crossed that our cars weren't stuck in the mud, as several were! (Ours weren't. Phew.)

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## Landbased in UCU

Do you teach a Landbased subject? The Landbased Educational Committee in UCU consists of regional representatives from landbased departments, colleges, and universities interested in promoting this specialised area of education. Meeting three times a year with an annual conference, the agenda includes discussion and debate around a mixture of organising, industrial and educational matters.

Members of the committee represent UCU on a number of national committees such as the sector skills body Lantra and NPTC, the awarding body part of City & Guilds responsible for Landbased subjects.

Are you interested in becoming a part of this group? If you are prepared to become active on this committee, please

contact national our official Christiane Ohsan at [cohsan@ucu.org.uk](mailto:cohsan@ucu.org.uk) or the Landbased Representative Bernice Waugh at [bernicew100@yahoo.com](mailto:bernicew100@yahoo.com)  
Next meeting is on **Friday 16 November at UCU Britannia Street, London.**

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## EDUCATION NEWS

### NPTC – part of City & Guilds Group

NPTC is the largest nationally recognised awarding body within the Landbased Sector. Bernice Waugh represents UCU Landbased Committee at NPTC.

### Education Update:

UCU reps Bernice Waugh NPTC and Chris Dyke Lantra report:

### National & Advanced National Certificate Reviews

Revised qualification handbooks have been available since September but some current Certificates will be extended for another year. (More preparation time perhaps?)

### National and Advance National Certificates

All of the current NC's and ANC's are being extended for a year to allow continuity of provision. In addition, revised qualifications in Floristry, Equine and Animal Care will be launched in September 2007. The veterinary qualifications will be extended with a slight amendment.

## National Vocational Qualifications

NPTC is awaiting the revised National Occupational Standards for several NVQs. As the standards are not yet finalised all will be extended to either July 2008, with the exception of Horse Care, which is being re-developed for Jan 2008.

Go to the NPTC website for full details and latest news.

## 14-19 Diploma

As time moves on there are hints that the sheer scale of this development may lead to a scaling back with pilot schemes to test the water. Whatever is done time is now short to get many schemes up and running.

## 19 Plus

There is always a tussle between the Treasury and the Education Departments. We are just getting used to the LSC taking a planning and leadership role. In this priorities are being set which can affect colleges. The Leitch report on FE prepared for the treasury swings the other way. It sees very heavy emphasis on Train to gain with candidates and companies free to roam the country for the best deal. It also opens the door to commercial companies entering the market by competing with or taking over college departments!

The famous ILA scheme is also due for a revival with pilots using new vouchers to be started in the near future. One pilot area already identified is the south east.

## Congress 2007

A motion originating at the Landbased Education Committee was submitted by the Welsh College of Horticulture.

### 13 - Migrant Workers (Welsh College of Horticulture)

#### Congress:

1. is concerned by the exploitation of all migrant workers, particularly those in landbased industries, especially in areas of terms and conditions of employment, rates of pay, health and safety, working time directive and discrimination
2. notes that such workers do not or cannot access the proper education and training which would ensure that each worker can make a positive and valuable contribution to society
3. instructs the NEC to work with appropriate TUC affiliated trade unions to:
  - 3.1 mount a recruitment campaign and bring migrant workers into union membership
  - 3.2 ensure that all relevant employment laws are being adhered to
  - 3.3 lobby government to provide the funding for access to both language and vocational/academic training.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## Union Learning Reps

Do you have union learning reps in your branch? The TUC has been very

successful in promoting learning in the workplace

There are many advantages to branches in having trained and supported ULRs in their branch. The ULRs gives members contact with someone who:

- they know and who may have helped them in the past
- is completely independent, whose advice they can trust
- they know will treat everything they say in confidence if necessary
- can provide information about learning opportunities, available both inside and outside of the workplace
- is properly trained and informed, capable of representing their learning needs and interests with their employer
- provides reliable information about everyday training matters as well as new and existing learning and skills initiatives such as foundation degrees and other professional qualifications.

If you are interested in becoming a ULR, Union Learning Rep courses are available in your area. UCU have a 1 day conference on Union Learning on 17 November at Britannia Street – travel expenses will be paid and the application must be in by 10 November. Look on the web site for details of the programme and the application form.

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## Equality Changes

In October of this year a new body will be formed called the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, CEHR.

The CEHR will bring together the work of the three existing Commissions, the Commission for Racial Equality CRE, Disability Rights Commission DRC and the Equal Opportunities Commission EOC, into one new body.

The CEHR will take on all of the powers of the existing Commissions as well as new powers to enforce legislation more effectively and promote equality for all. The Commission will champion the diverse communities that make up modern Britain in their struggle against discrimination.

It will also promote awareness and understanding of human rights and encourage good practice by public authorities in meeting their Human Rights Act obligations. New powers to take human rights cases will give a new arrow to the bow of many minorities who suffer discrimination.

A large number of colleges, whilst having equality policies, pay little more than lip service to the current legislation regarding their legal duties. UCU have excellent equality publications with guidance for branches and colleges on equality issues. The latest UCU/Unison publication on the Disability Equality Duty, has the results and examples from 5 pilot colleges that are very, very useful. Go to the UCU website for more details.



## College & University Support Network - CUSN

Teaching in FE is demanding and challenging enough without external factors that can increase the stress loads of members. But the **good news** is your union can help.

**CUSN** was set up in collaboration with UCU, to meet the specific needs of those working in further and higher education. It's a great support – try it for yourself.

**CUSN** offers free, confidential support services for those working in the further and higher education sector in the UK.

Launched in November 2006, CUSN is a national charity set up to support all further and higher education staff and their families, regardless of age, length of service or union affiliations, to improve their well being and effectiveness.

The **CUSN** website includes a detailed info centre with over 300 fact sheets available to download on a wide range of topics from managing your workload to resolving disputes with colleagues, dealing with stress or preparing for your retirement.

There is a free 24-hour support line provided by UK-based qualified coaches and counsellors with experience in the education sector on **08000 32 99 52**.

Visit the CUSN website via UCU using the following link:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2189ion>