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UCU SETS OUT FUTURE OF NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION PAY TALKS

The special sector conference to discuss the future of the JNCHES bargaining machinery through which UCU conducts collective bargaining, was held in London on Friday 9 November. Following this conference, the University and College Union (UCU) said it is keen to conclude new arrangements for national pay bargaining for UK universities if it received key assurances about its future operation.

The conference resolved to consider pay negotiating for all staff at a single table so long as UCU's ability to negotiate effectively on behalf of the staff groups it currently represents remains and its ability to determine if, and when, it can call on its members to take industrial action is unimpeded.

UCU general secretary, Sally Hunt, said that the union listened to its members and would now be seeking meetings with both the employers and the other unions that represent university staff.

REGIONAL SEMINARS SET FOR LA/BRANCH NEGOTIATORS

The UCU HE team is running a series of regional seminars for LA/branch negotiators to explore key issues arising from the implementation of the Framework Agreement.

The seminars are aimed at those local associations and branches where new pay and grading structures have been implemented as a result of the Framework Agreement, or where the local implementation agreement is very close to national ratification.

The seminars will cover:

- Identification of national and local negotiating priorities
- Inclusion of hourly paid staff
- Equal pay audits and the public sector duties
- The pay and reward agenda: promotion procedures, progression arrangements, contribution pay, market supplements
- Role analysis: dealing with red circling, how job evaluation and role analysis will be used in the future

The date, venue and contact for each regional seminar are listed below. Each branch/local association is encouraged to nominate one negotiator to attend. Please contact the appropriate person to register your interest for the seminars. Travel expenses will be paid centrally and lunch will be provided on the day.

Date	Venue	Contact	Email
6 December 2007	London	Rita Drayson	rdrayson@ucu.org.uk
12 December 2007	Bristol	Jane Gastrell	kgastrell@ucu.org.uk
30 January 2008	Newcastle	Emma Alexander	ealexander@ucu.org.uk
14 February 2008	Manchester	Helen Sidlow	hsidlow@ucu.org.uk
6 March 2008	Birmingham	Michelle Dean	mdean@ucu.org.uk
25 April 2008	Edinburgh	Lesley Little	llittle@ucu.org.uk

Another seminar is being organised in Cardiff in April 2008. If the seminars prove to be oversubscribed consideration will be given to organising further events.

**UCU ANNUAL MEETINGS:-
- FIXED-TERM AND HOURLY PAID
STAFF**

The UCU's first national annual meeting was held on 26 October and was relatively well attended – although we look forward to improving representation at branches in FE in future years. There was lively debate at the meeting and a number of motions were passed. Three workshops were run on

the day – on pensions and hourly paid staff, the revision of the research concordat and one on organising and recruiting fixed-term and hourly paid staff.

Following a number of co-options at the annual meeting there is a full Fixed-term and Hourly Paid Staff Committee with representation from HE and FE. Jean Crocker (Durham University) has been

elected as Chair. Uniquely amongst the specialist employment groups, this committee represents members working across both HE and FE and the committee's work will be supported by Rachel Curley and Jane Thompson from the HE department and Andrew Harden from the FE department.

The first meeting of the Fixed-term and Hourly Paid Committee took place on 16 November.

- MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING AGREES TO A REVIEW OF UCU ORGANISATION

The inaugural meeting for MRC, NIBSC and GE Healthcare members was held on 31 October. As well as dealing with the formalities such as the election of a new committee, those present discussed issues of concern to affected members, including: the ongoing delay to the annual pay increase; the MRC's plans to move from HAY to the JEGS evaluation system; and, the MRC's decision to cut their welfare officer post.

It was noted that officials from UCU and the other unions recognised in the MRC had written to complain at the ongoing delay in concluding this year's pay

POST-92 ANNUAL STAFF MEETING set for 23 November will discuss matters related specifically to the employment of staff in post-92 higher education institutions and motions from branches and local associations. The meeting will take place at UCU Britannia headquarters and run from 10am to 4pm. It will be the first annual meeting for post-92 staff.

Afternoon workshops will be held on:-

- Implementing the Framework Agreement;
- Recruiting and organising fixed-term and hourly-paid staff;

negotiation. Thanks to pressure from all trade unions, an interim payment will be made in the November but this still leaves major process issues to be taken up with the new chief executive.

There was also agreement that there should be a review of UCU organisation within MRC. Five specific action points were referred to the committee for further action. These were:

- 1.** Investigating the development of a virtual branch with greater use of email discussion groups and facilities such as a face book;
- 2.** producing a specific but simple recruitment leaflet highlighting the role of UCU in the MRC;
- 3.** mapping the MRC units for staff/union members and representatives;
- 4.** reviewing the role of committee members to spread the workload and involve more members;
- 5.** using surveys on current issues as an organising tool.

The review will report on progress to the 2008 annual meeting.

- Pensions;
- Bargaining for equality.

The gathering will also provide great networking opportunity for UCU members from all geographical areas.

ACADEMIC-RELATED UPDATE – The newly elected academic related staff committee met on 14 November. The committee reviewed the motions and action points arising from the national annual meeting for academic related staff held on 17 October 2007. These informed the development of the committee's priorities for 2007-08 which are:

- 1 To update and re-launch the UCU manifesto for academic related staff
- 2 To monitor, analyse and publicise the implementation of the Framework Agreement for academic related staff, and provide advice to the Higher Education Committee on how UCU should respond to any disproportionate affect on this group of staff.
- 3 To publicise and raise the profile of the work of academic related members and activists within UCU.

More information will be available soon about the work the committee is doing to progress these three priority areas, via the academic related pages on the UCU web site and via the email contact list for academic related activists.

If you would like to get in touch about any of these areas of work, please contact Rachel Curley, secretary to the committee rcurley@ucu.org.uk or Dave Anderson, chair of the committee d.anderson@comperv.gla.ac.uk.

UCU CONDEMNS CONTINUING GENDER PAY GAP

The University and College Union (UCU) has condemned the continuing 'gender pay gap' in further and higher education which maintains women lecturers' average gross weekly pay at as much as £150 per week behind the that of their male colleagues.

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics, show the average gross pay of female full time teaching professionals is 17.2% less (2006: 16.4%) than that of male colleagues in higher education and 11.1% less (2006: 11.2%) in further education.

In universities this means women lecturers earn on average £150 a week less than male lecturers. In FE colleges, women lecturers earn on average £76 a week less than male lecturers.

UCU general secretary Sally Hunt has said that women remain under-represented in senior and better paid positions in both further and higher education and the pay gap for women lecturers in colleges is depressingly static and in universities the situation is even worsening despite promises from employers, in last year's pay deal, that they would address this. The general secretary added that there is still a long way to go before the opportunities for career

advancement and better rewards can be deemed equal for women and men teaching professionals. The union therefore will renew its pressure for regular, comprehensive, equal pay audits involving UCU, to investigate inequalities in every university and HE institution.

UCU COMMENT ON SPENDING REVIEW

UCU Scotland warned that the Government's warm words about a 'smarter Scotland' had to be backed with proper funding. The union is disappointed that the recent spending review announcement of funding for higher education only delivered a real terms 2% increase over three years.

Commenting on the spending review, UCU Scotland President, Terry Brotherstone, said: "The Government put a smarter Scotland at the centre of the economic strategy published earlier this week, yet days later has failed to invest in the skills and innovation required to build our economy.'

He added that higher education is reliant on the quality of the professionals who deliver and support teaching and research, and paying people properly is a top priority. As universities face up to the challenge of equal pay review in the months ahead, they cannot dodge the need

to close the gender pay gap. Investment in new buildings and new projects must be handled carefully and there must not be over-commitment or lax financial management of the sort which can all too easily result in shiny new buildings being paid for by redundancies and ongoing inadequate pay.

The overall funding for the Scottish Funding Council is only increased by 2.3% in real terms over the three years of funding announcement. Next year there is a small real terms cut in funding followed by real term increases of 1.7% and 1.3%. The estimated total funding increase for higher education in cash terms is about £116m and falls short of the funds requested by universities to allow them to meet the challenge of top-up fees in England and to compete on the world stage. Once capital funding is factored out the increase over 3 years is just 2% in real terms.



JOIN UCU ONLINE TODAY –

Ask a colleague, help the union grow

Over **600 new members** have been recruited via the online joining facility in the last month. You too can also help the union grow: email a colleague the link to join online today. Here it is: <http://joinonline.ucu.org.uk/>

UCU represented on the Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning - In our last issue, we wrote about the Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning, coordinated by NIACE, which aims to investigate and report on current practices in the employment of disabled people in order to make recommendations that positively influence culture and practice and promote career opportunities for disabled people.

Good News: UCU is represented on the Commission by Sasha Callaghan and Kate Heasman and will submit a response in December. We encourage branches/LA's and individuals to submit responses.

The interim report of the Commission was launched in September 2007. This report details the findings so far and highlights issues relating to the inequalities experienced by some disabled staff working in the lifelong learning sector.

As stated previously, the interim report is out to consultation until **7 December 2007**. Everybody with an interest in disability issues in the lifelong learning sector is urged to respond to the consultation to advise whether the Commission has identified the key issues affecting disabled staff and what other issues should be explored and highlighted.

The Commission has also been collecting evidence about personal experiences and employment practices through questionnaires. In particular, the Commission wants to hear more about part-time and agency staff; people with mental health difficulties; people from black and minority ethnic groups; younger disabled staff; less qualified staff; and any instances of promising practice.

To provide evidence for the commission;

- Visit: www.niace.org.uk/projects/commissionfordisabledstaff;
- Email: Commissionfordisabledstaff@niace.org.uk; or
- Telephone Caroline Law, 0116 204 4249.

Conferences and reports

A conference to launch the final report of the Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning will take place in London on **5 March 2008**. To find out more visit: www.niace.org.uk/conferences



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