

JNCHES reform – HE briefing 5 March 2008

Colleagues

At its meeting on 29 February the Higher Education Committee considered the outcome of the ballot and decided on further action.

The ballot result is set below and the committee agreed the following resolution.

HEC notes the rejection of the employers' proposals for new bargaining arrangements by a decisive majority and the members voting in a well-supported national ballot.

HEC affirms its support for national negotiations in line with sector conference policy, and notes the sector conference acceptance of single-table bargaining (STB), subject to the safeguards set out in the Dundee motion on national negotiations, to:

- (a) Make the retention of lead bargaining rights for Grades 6 and above a non-negotiable part of any negotiations;
- (b) Make the right to industrial action and the right to ballot for industrial action at any time of the year non-negotiable;
- (c) Defend national pay scales and national negotiations, with a tactical flexibility around the issue of a 'Single Table', an implicit part of the Framework Agreement.
- (d) Make the maintenance of the link between academic and academic related pay non-negotiable. Any shift in the spine that alters academic staff roles as a group must similarly alter academic related roles. The term academic related will include all current roles and roles arising in the future that were classed as academic or other-related prior to the implementation of the framework, even if the institution has ceased to use the term academic-related.

HEC resolves that:

1. The GS and the national negotiators should seek an early meeting with UCEA to secure HESC policy prior to acceptance of the framework.
2. A president's briefing for branch and regional officers be arranged on the pay framework as soon as possible, with the understanding that the briefing will inform

motions from branches and regions to HESC in May, under the 'urgent, timely and requiring a decision' rule.

3. Branches and LAs be urged to highlight this issue in meetings in the run-up to HESC in May, and be aware of the importance of defending the third year of the current pay settlement, if necessary.
4. A major session at HESC in May be devoted to a debate on the future of pay framework and national bargaining.
5. The GS should lead a press campaign to explain that the timetable constituted a de facto 'no strike' clause in the revised JNCHES framework, and that this was one of the key factors in members' rejection of the proposals, together with the absence of a robust structure in defence of UCU's special interest groups.

The committee expressed its thanks to all branch officers who worked so hard to achieve a the sizable participation in this ballot of which it has often been said while being somewhat of a technical and arcane issue is nevertheless one of key importance for the future of members' pay.

Approaches have been made to the employers and arrangements are being put in place for the briefing for branch and regional officers, and further details will be announced soon.

The general secretary has also written to the other campus unions seeking agreement to joint responses should any employers propose breaking away from national bargaining.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Keight
Head of higher education
University and College Union

OFFICIAL UCU BALLOT

REFORM OF NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION NEGOTIATING STRUCTURE (JNCHES)

Our independent scrutineers' report of voting in respect of the above, which closed at 5pm on Wednesday 27th February, is as follows:

QUESTION

"SHOULD UCU AGREE TO THE PROPOSED REFORM OF THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION NEGOTIATING STRUCTURE?"

RESULT OF VOTING

Number of ballot papers issued:	61,258
Number of ballot papers returned:	16,658
Number of papers found to be invalid:	15
Thus, total number of valid papers to be counted:	16,643

Number voting YES	6517	(39.2% of valid vote)
Number voting NO	10126	(60.8% of valid vote)
<hr/>		
TOTAL	16643	(100% of valid vote)