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MEMBERS REJECT JNCHES PROPOSALS AND UCU CALLS FOR UNITED ACTION AGAINST BREAKAWAY EMPLOYERS

Following the decisive vote against the current proposals for the reform of the national negotiating arrangements (JNCHES) the General Secretary has called for urgent talks with the employers body (UCEA); informal discussions are expected to take place soon. The two major sticking points are the employer's insistence on a rigid timetable for pay negotiations and lack of clarity about UCU's ability to represent our own members on academic and related issues.

BRIEFING FOR HE BRANCH OFFICERS: A briefing to discuss UCU's position in relation to the reform of the JNCHES machinery and the future of pay bargaining will take place on **Wednesday 2 April, 14.00-17.00 at the University of London Union (ULU), Malet Street, London WC1E 7HY**. Presidents/Chairs or their nominees from each HE institution are expected to attend the event.

SAVE KEELE SAVE JOBS - JOIN THE RALLY ON THURSDAY 3 APRIL

Keele University are proposing to restructure the highly respected School of Economic and Management Studies (SEMS) with a new Business school which will result in the loss of half the academic staff. Senior management are still refusing to withdraw the threat of

compulsory redundancies, despite local and nationwide opposition, since the announcement in December 2007. We know this is the thin end of the wedge, by getting away with this now will mean it is rolled out across the University and possibly across the Pre-92 sector. Members at Keele are currently taking Action Short of Strike, but members in SEMs, have also taken one day's strike action. The final decision regarding the proposals is being made on 3rd April by the University Council. Local support has been brilliant but the members at Keele are seeking your support to attend a national rally.

Date: 3rd April 2008, Assemble at: Keele University, Time: 10.30 to 13.00

If you cannot make the rally please pass on your support to the Local Association Mike Ironside – m.d.ironside@hrm.keele.ac.uk **AND** let the Chair of Council know, by **2nd April**, that the current situation is totally unacceptable - Ian Dudson ian.dudson@dudson.com

For more details of the rally, or to let us know you are coming please contact Julie Cooper (jcooper@ucu.org.uk) 0121 634 7386

If you haven't already done, so please sign the online petition on:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/keeleredundancies> and to read more:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/keeleredundancies>

THE GENDER EQUALITY DUTY: 30 April in London; 16 May in Leeds

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES ONE YEAR ON

On Wednesday 30 April, the first anniversary of the introduction of Gender Equality Schemes, **UCU will be holding a joint event with the Equality Challenge Unit and UNISON on achievements and challenges**. This event will be held at UCU'S Head Office in London (Britannia street). A second event will be held at Leeds University on May 16th. The events are aimed at HE equality and diversity practitioners, and union officers, particularly reps. UCU will pay the expenses of members attending.

This event has been jointly organised by Equality Challenge Unit, UCU and Unison - we are aware of the amount of new equalities legislation public sector organisations now have to comply with and believe that additional support in embedding the new Duties, including the Gender Equality Duty, is paramount.

Attendance at the event would be particularly useful for equality practitioners, trade union officers, academics and managers interested in gender equality.

The event will provide a platform to discuss how HEIs have dealt with challenges in implementing their Gender Equality Schemes and reporting back on progress. It will do this by encouraging discussion, giving participants practical advice, as well as demonstrating how universities can work in partnership with other agencies.

Aims

- 1 To provide a forum for staff involved in the implementation of gender equality schemes to share good practice and discuss areas of difficulty.
- 2 To discuss annual reporting on gender equality schemes and mechanisms for assessing impact.

Objectives

Participants will:

- Learn about what other institutions are doing in their gender equality schemes
- Have the opportunity to speak openly and confidentially about the challenges they are facing in their institutions

The event is free to all university staff. For more information, to reserve a place and to obtain a booking form contact Sarah Guise Policy Adviser Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), 7th Floor, Queens House, 55/56 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3LJ Tel: 020 7438 1015 Fax: 020 7438 1011 Email: sarah.guise@ecu.ac.uk **Please apply before March 31.**

Following the welcome and introduction, there will be addresses on ensuring compliance with Gender Equality Schemes – a trade union perspective and gender equality and distance learning. Afternoon workshops also forms part of the day's agenda.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY'S STRATEGIC PLAN: VIEWS WELCOMED

The Higher Education Academy, the body responsible for supporting teaching and learning in higher education, is consulting over its strategic plan. The draft plan describes the HEA's ambitions for the next five years and sets out a number of strategic aims such as encouraging the sharing of effective practice and raising the status of teaching in higher education.

The consultation document is at

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/2008-13draftstrategicplan>

UCU is planning to respond to the strategic plan and would welcome comments and views from members on this issue. Please can you send your responses to Rob Copeland rcopeland@ucu.org.uk by no later than **Monday 14 April.**

REPRESENTATION OF FIXED-TERM AND HOURLY PAID MEMBERS ON BRANCH COMMITTEES

Although not specified in the model branch rules, all branches are encouraged to facilitate fixed-term and hourly paid members serving on the branch committee. You may wish to have a specified fixed-term and hourly post position or have a reserved place to

ensure that at least one member of the committee is on such a contract.

It's equally important to have representation of fixed-term and hourly paid staff on your negotiating committee to ensure that the views and needs of all members are met during negotiations.

Those branches that have made the most progress in recruiting, organising and negotiating on behalf of fixed-term and hourly paid staff are those with active fixed-term and hourly paid committee members.

Many staff on fixed-term, hourly paid or other casual contracts find it difficult to become fully active within the union due to a variety of factors. Branches are urged to encourage such members to become involved by:

- Getting a commitment from your employer that no member of staff will suffer any detriment as a result of undertaking union duties or activities (this should include contract renewal and allocation of work specifically)
- Advising members of their legal rights in relation to undertaking trade union duties*
- Ensuring that any facility time provided is used to enable hourly paid and other part-time staff to take part in the union without loss of pay or to be paid (at

their normal rate of pay) for any duties undertaken outside of their normal working hours.

*Elected trade union representatives have the right to reasonable paid time off during working hours to carry out trade union duties. Such duties would include carrying out negotiations and representing members at grievance and disciplinary hearings. Paid time off should also be provided for relevant training. Part-time staff should be paid in the same way as full-time staff.

Your local recognition or facilities agreement may expand or enhance your legal minimum entitlement. There are specific provisions relating to union learning representatives and health and safety representatives.

For further information see the ACAS code of practice in time off for trade union duties and activities at

http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/1/q/CP03_1.pdf

UCU TEACHER EDUCATORS' NETWORK

UCU is hoping to establish a new largely electronic network for teacher educators. The purpose of the network is to raise the profile of teacher education inside UCU and to bring together members working in both higher and further education. If you are interested in joining the network, please contact Dan Taubman dtaubman@ucu.org.uk or Rob Copeland rcopeland@ucu.org.uk

UCU will be responding to the consultation document put out by OFSTED on proposals for the inspection of initial teacher education. **The closing date is April 7th.** If you have things that you would like UCU to be saying, please email dtaubman@ucu.org.uk or rcopeland@ucu.org.uk by **Tuesday 1 April**. The **OFSTED** consultation document is at http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/Internet_Content/Shared_Content/Files/2008/jan/iite0811_con.pdf

LATEST (2006-7) DATA ON GENDER PAY GAP AND % OF STAFF ON FIXED-TERM CONTRACTS

Although consistent UCU pressure to improve pay and conditions in UK higher education is bringing results we still have a long way to go. Average salaries in higher education have risen by 18% above inflation over the past decade, according to latest data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency. In addition, the gender pay gap is continuing to narrow, and the proportion of academics on permanent contracts is growing.

In 1995-6 the average salary for full-time academic employees (covering teaching-only, research-only and teaching-and-research staff) was £25,870. In 2006-7, the average rose to £41,130, growing by more than 12% in the past two years, and by 59% since 1995-6, in cash terms.

The real terms growth in average salaries – from annual pay rises, incremental increases and the improvements in pay under the Framework agreement - shows there has been nearly a 20% pay catch-up in the past ten years. So we are making in-roads into the 15 years neglect and decline of pay since the early 80's but we still need to work hard to ensure the quality of British HE by attracting the best and brightest new staff.

Gender Pay Gap narrows slightly

The latest HESA data also show that the gender pay gap – measuring the extent to which average pay for women falls behind

that of their male colleagues – has continued to narrow.

The full-time average salary for female academics in 2006-7 was £37,367. Although this was 13.7% less than the average for male academics, the gap has fallen steadily from its recent peak of 15.6% in 2000.

It is likely that the gradual increase of female academics in more senior job grades, the year-by-year growth in the overall number of female academics, their gradual rise up the incremental ladder, and the implementation since 2004 of the Framework agreement – designed to reduce pay inequalities – have all contributed to the narrowing of the pay gap. This is an encouraging trend but the job is not finished and we need to ensure that these trends continue.

Use of FTC's down

There is also positive news on employment, following recent changes in the law on use of fixed-term contracts. Overall, 62% of academics were employed on permanent contracts in 2006-7, compared with a low of 54% in 2000. The most significant change has been in the employment of research-only academic staff. In 2000, only 6% had a permanent contract. In 2006-7, that figure rose to 22%. In the same year, use of permanent contracts rose to 46% for teaching-only academics, and to 88% for teaching-and-research academics.

VISIT OF THE MEDIATION EXPERTS FROM CNCR GEORGIA TO SCOTLAND

On 12 March UCU Scotland hosted a seminar on new approaches to individual dispute resolution.

Professor Doug Yarn and Lin Inlow of the Consortium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution (Georgia State University) gave a presentation to UCU Scotland Officers and officials and UCU local casework coordinators from Scottish Universities. They discussed the nature of conflict and different negotiating techniques including "interest" based negotiation in which the emphasis is on the parties reaching a good understanding of each other's needs. The exercises used included negotiating the fee for a British jockey to ride a horse in the Kentucky Derby, in which, deploying a variety of negotiating styles, the participants produced a striking variety of agreements.

David Bleiman, Assistant General Secretary Scotland, gave an example of the opening of mediation between two employees in dispute. Mediation is a form of negotiated resolution of a dispute in which the parties have the assistance of an independent facilitator to help them explain and discuss their concerns and, where possible, reach agreement. He then considered the pros and cons of using mediation and how a union rep could ensure that any member offered mediation by management could be advised to ensure that the member makes an informed choice - the principle of informed consent being paramount. Finally he outlined the safeguards which union reps should insist on for members who decide to engage in mediation of their dispute. Amongst these are the right to be accompanied by a union rep, as in any other type of negotiation towards resolving a member's concerns at work.

Carol Fox, Head of Equality in Thompsons solicitors Scotland, joined David, Doug and Lin for a panel discussion which turned into a lively debate about mediation and how to ensure that members' interests are protected by UCU local involvement in negotiating the arrangements, links to existing procedures and safeguards.

David is UCU's contact person on the Steering Group of **HEFCE's Improving Dispute Resolution project**, which is researching existing practice and aims to promote improved ways of managing campus disputes (in the case of employees, only dealing with individual, not collective disputes with management). David would welcome any information and views from UCU reps or officials who have accompanied members in mediation or have had management proposals for the introduction of mediation schemes in your higher education institution. He can be contacted on dbleiman@ucu.org.uk

JOIN UCU ONLINE

on this section of the UCU website:

www.joinonline.ucu.org.uk

