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All out on April 24

In a strong message to both the Association of Colleges and government UCU's Further Education members have voted 2 to 1 in favour of strike action in support of this year's pay claim.

Ballot results

For strike action:

Number of YES votes	6,841 (65.5%)
Number of NO votes	3,605 (34.5%)

For action short of a strike:

Number of YES votes	8,963 (86%)
Number of NO votes	1,430 (13.8%)

Joint Rallies – *together we are stronger*

The first day of strike action will be held this Thursday April 24. This coincides with strike action being taken by National Union of Teachers and Public and Commercial Services Union members giving government the loudest possible message that public sector workers cannot be taken for granted any longer.

Joining together with schoolteachers and public servant colleagues UCU, NUT and PCS has planned joint rallies for members in all regions. Members are encouraged to attend their branch picket lines in the morning before going to the nearest rally. Both of these are good ways to show students, the local community and media that FE needs their support and big numbers will make sure the message is loud and clear to all.

Enough is Enough – Pay up

The Association of Colleges has had the joint unions' pay claim for 08/09 since late January and has so far refused to make an offer. UCU rejected last years pay offer because it was below inflation and therefore cut pay for FE members.

The unions' claim for 08/09 is for:

- 6% pay increase or £1500, whichever is the greater
- A minimum hourly rate of £7.38
- Meaningful negotiations on common conditions of service in all colleges

FE unions have already demanded that any settlement for this year must take into account last year's shortfall when compared to inflation. The joint unions submitted an early claim this year stressing to the AoC that colleges need to address urgently and seriously that college staff are falling behind while cost of living surges. Average earnings for other workers grew at least 2% more than FE staff over the last year.

AoC shows no urgency

The AoC shows no urgency dealing with lecturers pay while their member principals pay themselves handsomely.



Four months after receiving the unions' claim for 08/09 the AoC has now finally agreed to meet with unions on the 1 May.

UCU's FE pay negotiators are pleased such an overwhelming majority of members voted in favour of Thursday's strike. This will help negotiators make the point that lecturers have had enough.

The negotiators message on the 1 May will be strongest with all UCU members on their picket lines on Thursday 24 April and joining the regional rallies.

What should I do?

- All members who were balloted are instructed by the union to take strike action on 24 April i.e. **you should do no work on that day, on or off the premises.**
- Contact your branch officers and volunteer for picket line rotas and leafleting.
- Find out from your branch officers where your nearest rally is being held and make sure you attend.

Prison educators to join strike

Prison educators who are UCU members employed by an FE College have been balloted together with their college based colleagues and are taking part in strike action on 24 April.

All College staff have seen their pay fall behind comparable professionals. Prison Ed staff have faced increased workloads under the Offender Learning and Skills Service, more targets, new initiatives and bureaucracy from Government. Relentless retendering and contracting out and in the face of this for many in Prison Ed their pay is even lower than that of their college based colleagues.

The call is on for Prison Ed teachers to show to their employers that they are part of the same workforce and deserve a better deal too by joining the activities planned on the 24 April. It is important for the prison authorities to see that Prison Ed staff are joining this strike with other FE lecturers.

If you organise pickets or plan to attend rallies and meetings organised on the day contact your Regional office or cohsan@ucu.org.uk for more information and resources.