

In this issue

Final Pay Offer from AoC

Can you make a contribution to UCU's academic journal?

Show your support for Local Government workers

Final Pay Offer from AoC

Following another lengthy day of negotiations on 25 June the AoC made what they term a final offer for this year's pay round of 3.2% on all scales and allowances from 1 October 2008 or £550 whichever the greater.

This new offer, following hard on the heels of the brilliant strike by London members on 9 June, represents an improvement on the earlier offer of 2.5% over the same period, which had been rejected by all trade unions.

The offer is worth 2.7% over 12 months but the 3.2% increase on scales means it is one of the best offers made within the public sector this year. Local Government and schoolteachers, for example, are being offered 2.45%.

The FE Committee (FEC) of the UCU National Executive has now discussed the offer in some detail. The improvement in the offer is acknowledged but at the same time it is disappointed that it still falls way behind the claim of 6% and is significantly behind current inflation that is running at 4.2%. This means a 1.5% cut in real terms at a time when fuel and food prices are rising at an astronomical rate.

The FEC believes the one day strike action on 24 April alongside the NUT, the joint FE unions' day of protest on 4 June, and the London UCU strike action on 9 June, was crucial in achieving the improved offer. It is convinced that a continuing campaign of industrial action alongside the other trade

unions could obtain some further improvements.

Many of the FE trade unions are now recommending acceptance or have accepted the offer. However UNISON, the largest support staff trade union, has decided to ballot all members without an explicit recommendation to accept or reject. Their FE leadership takes the view that the offer is the best that can be achieved by negotiation alone but if members vote to reject they must be prepared to take part in sustained and escalating industrial action beginning with a 2 day strike.

How we will decide

The result of the UNISON ballot will not be known until 8 September and so, the FEC considers it sensible to defer any final recommendation to members until we know whether UNISON accepts the offer or rejects, and organises action. With this in mind the following consultation process has been arranged to ensure the maximum involvement of members.

A special FE Sector Conference will be held in Birmingham on 20 September and consider the following motion (overleaf) submitted by the FEC.

motion →→→

"This conference welcomes the statement from the FEC meeting of the 4 July 2008. It notes that the AoC's offer of 3.2% over 10 months, while constituting an improved offer in terms of basic wage rates, falls significantly short of our original 6% claim and the current rate of real inflation. In the event of UNISON voting to accept the offer, the full UCU FE membership will be balloted as soon as practicable, in order to determine whether they wish to accept or wish to take further action in order to improve the offer."

The FEC will submit a further recommendation to Branches on the pay offer when the results of the UNISON ballot are known on the 8 September.

This will also include how we should continue the campaign for pay parity including the full implementation of national pay scales in all colleges. Branches will then hold meetings in the period 9–17 September to consider the recommendation and agree any amendments to be sent to the conference.

Make sure you attend your branch meeting to have YOUR SAY on the offer

Can you make a contribution to UCU's academic journal?

The Journal of Further and Higher Education (JFHE) is seeking to expand, augment and enhance its Editorial Board and Refereeing Panel, and welcomes expressions of interest.

JFHE is an international peer-reviewed journal, published by Routledge, which offers articles and book reviews covering the whole field of post-school education and training, including continuing education, further education and higher

education. The journal encourages debate and publishes research on contemporary pedagogic issues and professional and policy concerns. For example, the May 2008 issue included articles on: personal development planning implementation, fiction and film in teaching, academic writing. Aim higher, social inclusion, teacher education for the learning and skills sector, and competence based qualifications.

Both Editorial Board members and Refereeing Panel members are expected to referee articles; in addition, Editorial Board members play an active role in the development of the journal and attend Board meetings.

If you might be interested in making a contribution, please contact the Editor, Professor Jennifer Rowley, at j.rowley@mmu.ac.uk before Friday 28 November.

As a UCU member you can subscribe to JFHE for less than half the normal price. Go to the UCU website at: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/jfhep>

Show your support for Local Government Workers

A national strike by UNISON across local government is to be held on 16 and 17 July. UNISON members rejected a pay offer of 2.45% for most staff and an extra £100 a year for the lowest paid because this offer is way below inflation and is a pay cut.

Council offices, schools, libraries and more will all be affected. All members are urged to visit picket lines and offer support to our colleagues who like us are fighting for decent pay.