

## IN THIS ISSUE OF HE NEWS:-

- ❖ **Most employers commit to October increase despite protest**
- ❖ **Nottingham Trent Petition over 10,000**
- ❖ **Bibliometrics and the Research Excellence Framework (REF)**
- ❖ **Can you make a contribution to UCU's Academic Journal?**
- ❖ **UCU's Scotland criticizes taskforce report**
- ❖ **Prejudices being addressed at Bradford University School of Health Studies**
- ❖ **HE events coming up!**
  - \*\*\*\*\***Post-92 Annual Meeting – 31 October**
  - \*\*\*\*\***special Higher Education Sector Conference – 7 November**

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## **MOST EMPLOYERS COMMIT TO OCTOBER INCREASE DESPITE PROTEST**

From information received so far only a very small number of employees have indicated that they may not be able to meet the first of October pay increase. Those institutions were faced with financial problems regardless of the pay deal. Most others have confirmed that the increase will be met. Some are just not committing either way. UCEA advice has been to pay 2.5% with effect from the 1 October and the balance (RPI -2.5) in November when the September RPI figure can be applied to the salary run. Some employers anticipating an RPI above (3.5%) have agreed to pay this in October.

It is important to ensure that all employers agree to increase all pay points by the September RPI by no later than November and all should pay at least 2.5% in October. Any indication that this will not happen should be reported either to your regional office or to Malcolm Keight at [mkeight@ucu.org.uk](mailto:mkeight@ucu.org.uk)

## **NOTTINGHAM TRENT PETITION TOPS 10000!**

Over **11,000 UCU** members have signed the petition in support of colleagues at Nottingham Trent.

Following an email from UCU General Secretary to members, the petition has now more than doubled from 5000 to over 11,000 in a matter of days. Thank you to everyone who has signed! We now need to mobilise this massive show of support and organise for the

nationally supported demonstration and rally. Details have been firmed up and the branch would like to confirm that the rally will take place on **Monday 6 October at 1230pm outside the Royal Concert Hall** (where the VC will be delivering a series of speeches throughout the day). We know that some branches and regions are already organising for the day - please approach your branch today and see if they or your region will be attending. The national union will cover reasonable travel costs for those branches and regions that are able to organise coaches. Please note that the drop off point identified by the branch is just yards from the meeting point:

<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/newmap.srf?x=457163&y=340101&z=1&sv=South+Sherwood+Street&st=6&tl=South+Sherwood+Street,+Nottingham,+NG1&searchp=newsearch.srf&mapp=newmap.srf>

**\*WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY\*** - Please remember that this affects all of us – this is a direct attack on independent trade unionism. We need to make this the biggest petition that UCU has ever launched to set down a marker that this form of management is totally unacceptable.

PLEASE SIGN NOW: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/unionattack>

For more detail on the situation at Nottingham Trent click here:

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

UCU General Secretary, Sally Hunt says "The university can rest assured that it will feel the full force of the national union if it persists with trying to dictate the terms of the recognition agreement." Additional reading can be found at: -

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=402846&c=1>

## **BIBLIOMETRICS AND THE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF)**

UCU is concerned about the development of a bibliometrics-based system for assessing research. The proposals, known as the Research Excellence Framework (REF), will replace the RAE as the main form of evaluating research quality (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/>). While there are significant problems with the current RAE, we believe that citations will lead to a further distortion of academic activity, with detriment to some sub-disciplines. In turn, the REF could have a serious effect on individual academic careers and forms a significant threat to academic freedom (see our initial response at:

[http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/6/q/ucu\\_refresponse\\_feb08.pdf](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/6/q/ucu_refresponse_feb08.pdf)).

Currently, 22 institutions are involved in piloting the new bibliometric indicators (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pilot/inst/>). These pilots are mainly in science, engineering and technology subjects

(<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pilot/datacoll/UoA.pdf>). The first stage

involves collecting data about relevant research staff and publications, with future work leading to the development of citation indicators.

UCU is seeking to monitor the development of the REF as well as adopting a vigorous and broadly-based campaign against damaging aspects of the proposals. As a result, we would welcome feedback on the situation at your institution, particularly from members at one of the pilot universities.

For example, is your institution attempting to alter promotion procedures to reflect the move to citations? Are there already signs of greater performance monitoring, particularly in science and engineering subjects?

Please send in your comments and any information to Rob Copeland, policy officer  
[rcopeland@ucu.org.uk](mailto:rcopeland@ucu.org.uk)

### **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. Aimhigher, 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](mailto: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. Visit <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1840>.

### **UCU SCOTLAND CRITICIZES TASKFORCE REPORT**

UCU Scotland has responded to New Horizons: The Interim Report of the Joint Future Thinking Taskforce on Universities by criticizing the lack of staff and student representatives on the Taskforce, the short time scales for consultation and implementation and the lack of depth and detail in the report. The consultation period for the report was over the summer months with the report to be finalised in September, allowing little time for development of new funding arrangements.

Over a year ago UCU Scotland called for an expeditiously conducted but well-researched and widely consulted-over report on Scottish Higher Education. This was the moment for such a once-in-a-generation exercise, for which New Horizons is no substitute.

The report proposes changes to the role of the Scottish Funding Council and a major change to the funding mechanisms. UCU Scotland will work with other stakeholders to ensure new funding arrangements are widely understood and open to scrutiny. As part of that process a seminar has been arranged for 31 October which will give a historical and international context and a plenary session which will allow those sidelined by the Taskforce to discuss the role of higher education for the future of Scotland.

Further details of the UCU Scotland response to the Taskforce is available from

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

## **PREJUDICES BEING ADDRESSED AT BRADFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF HEALTH STUDIES**

It is appalling that some staff at Bradford University's School of Health Studies have been subjected to racism. It is particularly shocking because universities should be centres of enlightenment, rather than home to bigoted attitudes. But, while the treatment of these people is to be condemned, the way that the issue has been tackled by the university is worthy of comment too.

Although there is now a pleasing consensus that racist attitudes, language and behaviour prevalent only a few decades ago are no longer welcome or acceptable, that does not mean the battle is won. Many people are not open about their prejudices, but still harbour them and this can still have a devastating effect on the lives of others.

Addressing such attitudes is vital in a university town such as Bradford whose diversity makes it what it is, and can be seen as one of its strengths both culturally and economically. However, if this is not to be undermined, it is important nothing is allowed to drive a wedge between any particular groups. So racism must be tackled where and when it occurs – and seen to be tackled. That is what the university is doing.

There has been a refreshing openness and honesty about the matter, and there seems to be a very real desire to ensure such a situation does not arise again. To this end, UCU officials Brian Everett and Roger Kline negotiated with the university's new Vice Chancellor Professor Mark Cleary, to institute an entirely independent Review Panel to look into the background to the events in the School of Health and the manner in which they were tackled. This will include not only the attitudes of staff, but also the policies and practises in the university.

This Review Panel has now begun its work, and is acting outside of the university administration and structures taking evidence from a wide range of people. We await its conclusions with interest, and will report them to the UCU membership.

## NEW, IMPROVED, AND EXPANDED UCU HEALTH AND SAFETY WEB PAGES

Here's the link to the new, improved, and expanded UCU Health and Safety web pages:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3389>

These are in three main parts -

- ❖ a members health and safety section
- ❖ a "health and safety resource centre" mainly for reps, which contain lots of factsheets, the monthly newsletter, links, publications etc
- ❖ a new environmental section

## HE EVENTS COMING UP!

- ❖ **POST '92 HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS NATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING, FRIDAY 31 OCTOBER 2008**

It has been necessary to change the date of this year's **Post '92** HE institutions annual meeting. The meeting will now be held on Friday 31 October, rather than Friday 7 November as initially planned and as listed in the UCU calendar of meetings issued earlier this year. This change of date was necessary to accommodate a special Higher Education Sector Conference to discuss urgent issues which will take place on 7 November, the only convenient date, to ensure that matters can be discussed in a timely fashion.

There will be no change to the format of the post '92 annual meeting, with exception of the date. We apologise for the short notice of the change of date, but would still urge local associations/branches to hold local meetings at the earliest opportunity to nominate representatives to attend the meeting and propose motions for debate. The meeting will provide an opportunity for members in post-92 institutions to meet together, discuss matters of common interest and put motions forward to the Higher Education Committee. Please note that the attendance of all members must be confirmed by LA/Branch secretaries. The constitutional deadline for registration is **17 October 2008**. More details on <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2730>

- ❖ **THE SPECIAL HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR CONFERENCE – FRIDAY 7 NOVEMBER**

The Higher education Committee decided in June that a special Higher education Sector Conference (**HESC**) would take place in the autumn to consider the 2009 Pay Claim. It has since been agreed that the conference will take place on Friday 7 November in central London, details of which will be confirmed later. The draft claim will be agreed by HEC when it meets on 3 October. A formal calling notice for the conference will be sent out after that date. More information on <http://www.ucu.org.uk/heconference>