

Employers impose 2.3% and refuse to discuss an All-Wales Contract

fforwm have responded to the 2009 UCU claim for a pay increase of at least 2.3% (the school-teachers award) plus meaningful negotiations on developing common conditions of service by unilaterally imposing a 2.3% increase. They have flatly refused to discuss terms and conditions. The increase will be backdated to August and imposed in next month's pay packets.

Once again fforwm have blatantly undermined good industrial relations by refusing to pursue the proper agreed negotiating process. The joint unions have of course rejected this imposition. Negotiations are by definition a bilateral process. For the employers to think they can just do whatever they feel like doing highlights the contempt with which they treat unions and lecturers.

As you will recall, two years ago fforwm agreed to enter discussions on contractual issues following the publication of the Webb Review into FE. Now they have unilaterally reneged on this promise. UCU will not let this dishonesty go unchallenged. Some

Principals are deliberately trying to cause mischief by portraying our rejection as union greed. Let us be clear: this is not about greed, it is about forcing Principals to honour their promises!

Last Saturday FESC agreed to do everything it can to force the employers to honour their commitments and enter into meaningful negotiations on an All-Wales contract for lecturers:

- UCU has written to fforwm giving them an opportunity to change their position on common terms and conditions for lecturers and setting a deadline by which we expect a positive response.
- The joint unions have written to John Griffiths, the minister responsible for FE, asking for a meeting and urging him to support our claim for an All-Wales contract.
- FESC is asking all branches to call urgent branch meetings to fully engage all members in the fight for a fair, consistent contract which will apply to all lecturers in Wales. We suggest

that you debate the following motion:

'This branch condemns fforwm for unilaterally imposing a pay increase and failing to adhere to the proper negotiating procedures

It further condemns fforwm's refusal to honour its previous commitment to discuss the contractual implications of the Webb Review.

This Branch fully supports FESC in its decision to reject fforwm's position and supports its campaign to win an All-Wales contract ensuring fair and reasonable working conditions for every lecturer in Wales.

This Branch instructs Branch Officers to write to the Principal asking what position the College, within fforwm, has taken on entering discussions with UCU on developing common terms and conditions across Wales.'

- FESC recommends that all Branches contact their local AMs to push the case for common terms and conditions. We have had some encouraging responses from politicians sympathetic to our position. Coleg Morgannwg has written a model letter for AM's which can be used, adapted etc.

For help on this please contact David Hagendyk at Wales Office, Bridgend.

- UCU has written to all the Labour leadership candidates for First Minister asking them to commit themselves to an All-Wales contract. We will be publishing their responses.

There will be a **Special FESC on Saturday 5 Dec** (details to be confirmed) to decide on how to take our campaign forward. FESC was strongly of the opinion that whilst we should fully pursue all political avenues, we should be in no doubt that we will need to back this up with a campaign of industrial action if the employers are to be forced to enter into sensible negotiations. It is important that all branches send representatives to this meeting and take a full part in the decision-making process.

Together we can win this. Through political lobbying and effective industrial action UCU achieved The All-Wales Pay Agreement and forced every college in Wales to implement it. Now is the time to complete the job and win an All-Wales Contract for every lecturer in Wales.