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1. **Climate Solidarity**

The project to set up Climate Action Groups is well underway. Check the UCU (www.ucu.org.uk/climatesolidarity) and Climate Solidarity (www.climatesolidarity.org.uk) websites for resources to help you get started. Don't forget there is sector support for this. In HE HEFCE has referenced CAGs in Para 78 of their Carbon Reduction Policy Statement http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10_01/

People and Planet include a CAG reference in the Green League for the first time. Universities can increase their score by showing this is one way in which they carry out their 'staff engagement' (ref. People and Planet link below)

We are now at the point where a number of CAGs are being established. What they are called and the actions they take are up to the members of the group. For example:

Tooting Climate Front

The group on this site of South Thames College had their second meeting at the end of March. It was agreed to target improvement in 4 areas:

- Greening the curriculum – to introduce new resources in ESOL at Levels 1 and 2
- Community – to support a college float in the Tooting Transition Town carnival in July
- Workplace: 1. Waste - Carry out an audit of the recycling carried out on site. 2. Energy use – Investigate the effectiveness of the ICT power-down procedures

- Personal: 1. Cycling to work. 2. Encouraging behaviour change on switching off of equipment

The group plan to meet again in May to monitor progress on the above and show the DVD 'Hard rain'.

The first step for branches is to identify someone to start the process. Training is available to help set the groups up. Branches are urged to send someone to the training events that have been arranged. These are:

Cambridge, Friday 11th June
Exeter, Friday 30th April
London, Friday 23rd April
Leeds, Friday 16th April, Thursday 24th June
Liverpool, Friday 25th June
Newcastle, Friday 9th July
Oxford, Friday 17th September
Peterborough, Friday 7th May
Southampton, Wednesday 14th July
Southend, Friday 3rd September
Truro, Thursday 15th April

Contact Janet Pantland (jpantland@ucu.org.uk) to book a place.

Another series of 3 hour training events will be arranged for the autumn term in each region. Check the website and future newsletters for further details.

2. FE Regional Briefings

Meetings have taken place in 7 regions so far this year to promote our environment work. They have provided a chance to get an idea of how the UCU green agenda is being promoted at branch level. Participants filled in a Branch Organisation survey which led into a discussion about the reasons why this must become a priority issue. The role of a green rep. was outlined and the potential for this to become an organising tool to recruit new members and activists.

The results of the survey will be reported at the UCU National Environment Conference in November.

3. Green Rep Training in Dundee and London

UCU ran its first environment courses in February and March. A total of 28 reps attended and the feedback was very positive. The Dundee course had the distinction of being the first TUC environment course to be run in Scotland. Reps carried out an environment audit and developed Action Plans to take back and develop in the branch.

The next course will be held in Birmingham on June 14th-15th, 2010. For more information or to register, go to <https://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3998>.

4. Green Skills and Jobs

The government released a cross departmental consultation on a low carbon skills strategy on March 31st, 2010. This follows lobbying from the TUC and other organisations and a number of key reports from IPPR, Green Alliance and the Aldersgate Group. UCU will be making a submission to the consultation. If branches or individual members have any ideas for a UCU response then send them in to us or submit your own.

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/low_carb_skill/low_carb_skill.aspx

A 'Low Carbon Cluster' of eight Sector Skills Councils have recently published a skill assessment for low carbon skills requirements in key sectors:

<http://www.euskills.co.uk/home/resources/>

The TUC is seeking a commitment to advancing the basic and generic green skills needs of all workers (e.g. business resource efficiency skills) and for there to be a 'just transition' to a low carbon labour market with opportunities for young people to develop more specialist 'green skills' through education and vocational training and for workers in high carbon industries to receive investment to adapt their skills set.

The TUC is also promoting the activity and skills of the new green representative networks which have shown that significant progress can be made with regard to business resource efficiency and other environmental goals with collective action and partnership with management. For further information, please see the enclosed link to the TUC's Green Workplaces website: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/index.cfm?mins=402&minors=402>

In FHE there are real opportunities for job creation. Many of the skills needed require new courses or the adaptation of existing courses. Branches are urged to raise this with their employer in order that the curriculum reflects the potential future demand. UCU will be holding a fringe meeting at annual congress on this.

The Institute of Employment Rights is holding a seminar in London on Green Jobs on May 18th. Ref. <http://www.ier.org.uk/node/461>

5. Carbon Reduction

The Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme comes into effect on April 6th, 2010. Every FHE institution that uses at least 1 half hourly meter will have to report their energy usage for the year 2008. This is the base year for establishing whether they will become one of the 5,000 organisations who will have to purchase carbon allowances. The trigger point is if at least 6,000 megawatts of electricity is used. This is roughly equivalent to annual bills of £500,000

Branches should check whether their institution falls within the reporting requirements. Ask your Facilities / Environment Manager:

- *Do you have at least 1 half hourly meter? If the answer is Yes,*
- *Who will be preparing the carbon emissions report that must be publicly available by September, 2010?*
- *Will the institution qualify for full CRC membership?*

UCU are concerned about the way some institutions are approaching their carbon management duty. We have evidence that some employers are using energy efficiencies to justify job cuts. For this reason alone it is vital that branches are involved in carbon management strategies at an early stage. The guidance in the CRC supports this approach and can be quoted: The relevant part of the Annual Report below is on Page 22.

<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/GEHO0310BRYV-e-e.pdf>

6. People and Planet

People and Planet has published its methodology for the 2010 Green League table. HE branches need to check whether their institution is involved. If so, it will be worth pointing out the opportunity to gain points by engaging with staff and their trades unions.

<http://peopleandplanet.org/greenleague/methodology-2010>

7. Conference Reports

March has been a busy conference month for UCU. We have participated in 3 events that have provided an opportunity to present and develop our environment programme.

Campaign against Climate Change Conference – UCU is affiliated to this trade union campaign and was well represented at the conference. There were debates around rebuilding the climate movement after Copenhagen and organising around the demand for 1 million climate jobs.

TUC Green Workplaces Conference – This reviewed the work of the Green Workplaces project. This shows the difference that unions can make when they organise around environmental issues. It highlights the impact that unions can make if they appoint green reps. Despite this, Ed Miliband, the Secretary of State for DECC, maintained government policy in refusing to support statutory rights for this role.

EAUC Conference – This is the main annual event for institutions in the FHE sector. It brings together environmental practitioners and sector bodies. The conference provided an opportunity to reinforce the view that UCU and its representatives need to be engaged if there is to be a just transition to a low carbon strategy in FHE. EAUC provides a lot of useful resources. Branches are urged to check if their institution is affiliated in order to arrange access. More information at www.eauc.org.uk

8. Education for Sustainable Development

ESD is an area that represents potential growth in our sector at a time when we are faced with job cuts. In order that the FHE sector maximises the opportunities available we will need to campaign at all levels of the sector.

We have established a Head Office working group to support national and local initiatives on ESD. The next meeting will be on April 20th so look out for references to further resources on the UCU site.

9. UCU Guidance

We are planning to produce 2 leaflets in time for UCU annual congress in May on:

- **Engaging with employers on sustainable development**
- **Engaging with students on sustainable development**

This guidance will be more useful if it can be illustrated with a range of case studies. If you would like your work to be featured please get in touch.

Contacts:

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If you would like to be added to the UCU environment or climate solidarity networks email jpantland@UCU.org.uk