

Ballots on Pensions and Pay

On top of the uncertainties arising from government funding cuts, UCU members in England face another double-whammy attack this year – a cut in pay and plans to seriously worsen pensions. Not only offered a pathetic 0.2% pay rise when inflation runs at 4.7% RPI and a threat of no rise at all for next year, members may now also be asked to pay more and work longer for lower pensions.

Employers have now been notified that the ballots for industrial action on pay in England colleges and pensions in colleges in England and Wales, open next week on 22 February. Attached are the letters that were sent to principals along with a matrix of membership details (that we are legally required to provide). We remind you to organise a branch meeting as soon as possible. New campaign materials have been dispatched to branches. If you need additional supplies, please email:

jstephens@ucu.org.uk

You can view and download all the materials here:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/feaction2011>

Members must cast their vote to arrive by 14 March at the very latest.

Branch Pension Officers

It is important that your branch is kept fully apprised of developments and one way of ensuring this is for you to appoint a **Pension Officer**. This person will receive information for circulation to members and will act as a central communication point to enable branches to feed back responses to a national level as and when required. It is recommended that the individual is not one of the main branch officers, (given the burden of other activities).

Once you have appointed a member as Pension Officer, please send their name and contact to:

pensions@ucu.org.uk

Or post:

Pensions Officer
UCU Birmingham Office
2nd Floor Alpha Tower
Queensway Suffolk Street
Birmingham
B1 1TT

IfL

We have been contacted by many members and branches on the recent demands issued for IfL subscriptions. The campaign email sent to branches last Friday gave details of action taken so far by the union. (see extract below) The FEC meets this Friday and will decide on further campaigning.

UCU hits out at compulsory fees hike for FE lecturers – SIGN THE PETITION:

UCU has hit out at plans to more than double fees to be a member of the Institute for Learning (IfL) from £30 to £68 a year from April. Membership of the IfL is compulsory for lecturers in further education and UCU has warned that members will be furious at the increase. UCU general secretary, Sally Hunt, said: "College staff are highly professional people who make a vital contribution to our society and economy. It seems extraordinary that at a time when we need to be prioritising education, the IfL is making it more expensive for teaching staff to belong to this compulsory body. Many UCU members have told me in the past that they wonder what they get for their annual fees. UCU is considering all its options and will be responding robustly to these iniquitous and unfair proposals"

Read more here:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/5273>

And here:

<http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6069953>

WHAT YOU CAN DO: UCU has launched a petition which you can sign at:

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