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### **1. Employability Means Sustainability**

A priority for the UCU is embedding sustainable development into the curriculum. Our view is that if the government is serious about the emphasis on employability then a commitment to integrate ESD across the sector is needed. The Greener Jobs Alliance is working with a wide range of sector groups to push this policy forward. We are currently working with the NUS to identify ways in which staff and students can influence and monitor the progress being made by institutions.

FE developments – We are co-ordinating a project at South Thames College to look at how curriculum areas can link with community organisations and businesses. The World of Work week (w/c 18/3/13) is the focus for a number of events that illustrate how by working with community activists it is possible to increase the employability experience of students. This will be the subject of a video that will be premiered at the EAUC conference in April. We will also be helping to co-ordinate an event in the London region with LSIS on this theme on March 27th at UCU Head Office. Further details will be made available on the UCU website.

HE developments – the University of Gloucestershire has just produced a resource to support HEIs – ‘Guide to Quality and Education for Sustainability in Higher Education’. Details below:

*This resource is an attempt to make connections between Education for Sustainability (EfS) and the practice of quality assurance and enhancement in the HE curriculum. It is based on a HEFCE funded project, **Leading Curriculum Change for Sustainability: Strategic Approaches to Quality Enhancement**, which took place between 2010 and 2012. The project was led by the **University of Gloucestershire**, working in collaboration with the UK Quality Assurance Agency and in partnership across a consortium with four other English HE*  
<http://efsandquality.glos.ac.uk/institutions>

## **2. News from the TUC**

The TUC is organising a half-day seminar in its 'After Austerity' series on industrial policy for a changing climate. The debate will involve a high level panel led by TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady. Called 'Climate Risk: is industry rising to the low carbon challenge?', the event is provisionally set for the afternoon of 15 April 2013. Full details of speakers and booking arrangements will be on the TUC website shortly.

TUC Green Workplaces newsletter – follow the link below to find about the activities in other union networks

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-21730-f0.cfm>

## **3. Wales – Leading the Way?**

UCU is involved in the consultation process for a new legal duty that could have a significant impact on universities and colleges in Wales. If adopted it could also provide a model for other parts of the UK. A summary of the proposals is printed below.

*We committed in the Programme for Government to:*

- *legislate to put sustainable development at the core of the Welsh Government and public bodies in Wales; and*
- *create an independent sustainable development body for Wales.*

*We held a consultation earlier this year on our initial proposals for the Bill. We have used those responses to help us develop the proposals set out in this white paper, A Sustainable Wales: Better choices for a better future.*

*We now want your views on:*

- the proposals for a new duty to embed sustainable development as the central organising principle of selected organisations in Wales;*
- the proposals for an independent sustainable development body;*
- the proposed phasing and implementation of the duty, including the timing for the creation of the independent sustainable development body; and*
- the proposals to improve the accountability framework for sustainable development in Wales.*

Details of the consultation and the White Paper can be found at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/sustainabledevelopment/sdwhitepaper/?lang=en>

UCU Wales is co-ordinating our responses and comments from UCU branches in Wales should be sent to Bethan Healan before the March 4th deadline at [bhealan@ucu.org.uk](mailto:bhealan@ucu.org.uk)

## **4. Promoting the Sustainability Exchange**

If you are planning any activities in your workplace or community and need to check on available resources then log on to the EAUC's new service.

The Sustainability Exchange has produced materials to promote their new online resource. UCU is one of the founding partners and we urge all our contacts in the FHE sector to use the community forums, news feed, events diary, best practice guides, tool kits, reports, case studies, research, webinars and videos. The portal is a place for different institutions and organisations to interact and share their sustainability experiences. UCU has a partner page and we can promote the work of our reps to a larger audience so make sure you send us any examples of work you are doing.

<http://www.sustainabilityexchange.co.uk/>

## **5. Go Green Week**

Are there any UCU members planning to participate in Green Week from Feb 11th, 2013? If so, our friends at People & Planet have put together more quality resources. See the link below:

We've got some really exciting resources available for anyone planning activities for Go Green Week 2013, the UK's biggest week of student climate action. Whether you are a student, staff at a school or college, a University Environment Manager or a Student Officer. We have created tailor-made packs for you to download with all the relevant stuff you'll need to get others excited about climate action.

We love the fact that every Go Green Week is different - so we're keeping things flexible so that you can create your own timetable, your own branding and pick and choose from our suggested activities.

<http://peopleandplanet.org/gogreenweek/resources>

## 6. Climate Week

Climate Week takes place from March 4th -10th, 2013. In previous newsletters we have opened up a debate about whether this is an exercise in 'greenwash' or an opportunity to initiate some local activity. Some members pointed to the participation last year of RBS as a main sponsor as a reason why we should have nothing to do with it. UCU is one of the organisations listed this year as a supporter. However, we still have concerns, including the role of government in the publicity. For example, the Prime Minister uses the website to trot out the 'greenest government ever' message.

We are not organising any national events during the week but advising our reps to check if anything is happening locally that is worth supporting. We'll need to reassess the value of this event and would welcome any feedback on whether you found it useful as a way of getting support for sustainability initiatives.

<http://www.climateweek.com/about-us/>

## 7. Fuel Poverty Campaign

UCU has joined with 100 organisations to warn David Cameron that Britain is heading for a fuel poverty crisis owing to a failure of government policy. This made the front page of The Times on 21/1/13.

An extract and link is printed below:

In a letter to the Prime Minister, seen by The Times, they argue that ministers are not doing enough to tackle soaring gas and electricity bills that leave a growing number of people unable to heat their homes.

An unprecedented alliance, including Npower, the Co-operative, Age UK and Barnardo's, urges Mr Cameron to use money raised from the "carbon tax" to be levied from April to tackle the "national disgrace" of cold homes. A programme to

fit houses with proper insulation would, they say, protect the vulnerable, help the environment and boost the economy.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article3663253.ece>

UCU members are urged to sign the petition: [@EnergyBillRev](http://ow.ly/gYVED)

One of the UCU partners in the Greener Jobs Alliance, the Institute for Public Policy Research, says the green deal and energy company obligation will make 'only a limited contribution' to reducing emissions and tackling fuel poverty.

The report, 'Energy efficiency: Who pays and who benefits?', says in its current form ECO will take 125,000 to 250,000 households out of fuel poverty by 2023, but that this is less than a tenth of the 2.7 million fuel poor households in England. Its figures are based on the Hills fuel poverty review published in March.

The IPPR is calling for a new method of tackling fuel poverty, which it calls the 'low income, low efficiency area' approach. This would see funding targeted at areas that meet criteria based on income levels and the current energy efficiency of housing. All households in the identified areas could benefit.

The IPPR report comes as the government's independent Fuel Poverty Advisory Group for England warns that nine million people could be in fuel poverty by 2016, with 300,000 households dropping below the poverty threshold this winter due to rising energy prices.

Read the full report at:

[http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2012/12/energy-efficiency-whopays-whobenefits\\_Dec2012\\_10051.pdf](http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2012/12/energy-efficiency-whopays-whobenefits_Dec2012_10051.pdf)

## 8. UCU Environmental Rep Training

The 2 day Environment Reps courses scheduled for 2013 take place in:

Leeds – February 20th and March 19th, 2013

London – June 18-19th, 2013

Please contact Karen Brooks to make an application [kbrooks@ucu.org.uk](mailto:kbrooks@ucu.org.uk)

## 9. UCU Rep report: Bio-diversity

This is a new section of the newsletter where we ask a UCU Rep to report on an area of interest or work that they are involved in. One of the many potential areas for UCU environmental action is around what is being done by FHE institutions to protect and promote biodiversity. Dr Christopher Connolly, one of our reps from

the University of Dundee, has sent us the following comments on the subject. You may not agree with all the observations made here but we'd like you to let us know your thoughts and anything being done in your institution to promote bio-diversity:

*"The world 'celebrated' reaching 7 billion people on October 31st 2011. However, this phenomenal growth costs us our natural habitat and biodiversity. The world population will rise to 9 billion by 2050. This additional 2 billion people equals the world population in 1930! Therefore, agricultural intensification and habitat loss must increase.*

*Agricultural intensification requires the use of vast amounts of pesticides (insecticides, herbicides and fungicides). Unfortunately, these chemicals can also kill beneficial insects. Indeed, the pollinating honeybees, bumblebees, flies and moths are suffering major declines. These pollinators are essential to the production of most fruit and vegetables (including coffee!) and survival of our natural ecosystem.*

*What can we do? Vast amounts of pesticides are used in our gardens and university grounds, adding to the chemical exposure of our insects and limit the opportunities for insects to feed, rest, breed and overwinter. If we ban the use of all pesticides from our homes and university grounds and provide suitable habitats, then we could provide many thousands of critical Nature Reserves to aid insect survival. Insects require simple flowers all year round to feed on, rough ground (untidy areas) to rest in and places to survive the winter (piles of sticks and compost heaps). In the meantime, ecologists will endeavour to discover how to slow the current mass extinction of insect species."*

Linking bio-diversity to Agri-capitalism and population growth in this way has sparked a number of debates recently and we'd like to hear any feedback from readers of this newsletter on this topic.

## **10. And Finally...**

Congratulations to John James, the UCU Environment Rep at Coleg Gwent who has been chosen as the TUC Wales Green Rep of the Year. John, who is also the Wales UCU Environment Convenor, will receive his award on March 12th, 2013.

### **Get in touch**

**If you are a UCU member looking for advice on sustainable development or have ideas for greening the FHE sector please let us know. Contact: Graham Petersen, UCU Environment Co-ordinator:**

**[gpetersen@ucu.org.uk](mailto:gpetersen@ucu.org.uk)**