

## Contents

- 1. UCU Congress**
- 2. UCU Environment Rep training**
- 3. Working with students**
- 4. Greener Jobs Alliance**
- 5. EAUC Conference**
- 6. LSIS London Region events**
- 7. The politics of energy**
- 8. The climate crisis**
- 9. Confronting the climate crisis conference**

Welcome to the May issue. Don't forget we want your feedback on any of the news items that take your interest. In particular we would like to hear about what is happening in your part of the education sector.

### **1. UCU Congress**

At the end of this month UCU meets for its annual congress in Brighton. Our work is summarised in the NEC Report to Congress. A separate annual report is also being produced and will be available to delegates and then placed on the UCU website. On May 31<sup>st</sup> we have a fringe meeting with a speaker from the NUS. This will discuss strategies for joint working including Divestment Campaigns. It follows campaigns that have taken place in the USA around pressing institutions to drop high carbon investments. You can find out more about this on the People & Planet site <http://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free>. We have a motion going to Congress that supports these divestment campaigns. If you've got a view on this we'd like to hear it.

It also throws up questions about research funding like the recent one at Oxford University. Shell announced that it will go ahead with its plans to drill deeper than any other off-shore oil installation has gone before: almost 3km below the Gulf of Mexico. At the same time, Oxford University opened a new laboratory in its department of earth sciences. The lab is funded by Shell. Oxford says that the partnership "is designed to support more effective development of natural resources to meet fast-growing global demand for energy."

### **2. UCU Environment Rep training**

The next 2 day training session takes place on June 18<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at UCU head office. The course has recruited and will run but there are still some places available. It is a great opportunity to meet other reps and plan your priorities for 2013-14.

To apply and / or for further information contact National Education Officer Karen Brooks.  
Email: [kbrooks@ucu.org.uk](mailto:kbrooks@ucu.org.uk)

### **3. Working with students**

The UCU has consistently emphasised the importance of joint working to progress sustainability measures. Hopefully this work will take on added impetus with the announcement of a £5 million student green fund to the NUS from HEFCE. NUS see UCU as important partners to secure staff engagement and wider community links. We urge branches to make contact with their student body to identify potential projects. FE students can also apply to this fund if the college runs HE courses and is in receipt of HEFCE funding. Expressions of interest have to be with the NUS by June 5th.

<http://www.nus.org.uk/en/greener-projects/funding/students-green-fund/>

### **4. Greener Jobs Alliance**

UCU has just released a new video produced by the Greener Jobs Alliance which you may find useful as an example of the types of projects we are hoping to encourage. It is based on work done with South Thames College. The video 'Better Choices for a Better Future' is 4 minutes long and examines, through the experience of 4 students, how sustainability can be linked to employability. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fxn6SOpqmXA>

The quarterly meeting of the GJA held in April coincided with the news that CO2 emissions in the UK are going up. It highlighted the importance of a national education for sustainable development strategy. Even if we had the correct economic policies in place the UK would be unable to deliver them without the correct skills framework. Despite this the small steps that have been taken in this direction are going into reverse. The GJA Green Skills Manifesto provides a set of proposals to establish the range of policies needed.

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/5269>

### **5. EAUC Conference**

This took place at the University of Nottingham on April 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2013. It was a well attended conference and an excellent opportunity to get up to date with key developments across the sector. UCU was involved in delivering a workshop on community engagement. It showcased the work of Lewisham and South Thames Colleges and their trade union inspired projects that won 2 Green Gown Awards in 2012.

To find out about current EAUC initiatives including how to apply for the 2013 awards check: <http://www.eauc.org.uk/home>

### **6. LSIS London Region events**

On March 28<sup>th</sup> a successful event was run at UCU Head Office on the theme of 'Sustainability and Employability'. It brought together representatives from all parts of the tertiary sector. It identified challenges and the measures needed to embed education for sustainable development into the curriculum. Copies of the report are available from [gpetersen@ucu.org.uk](mailto:gpetersen@ucu.org.uk)

On June 26<sup>th</sup> the next regional workshop will take place at UCU Head Office, Carlow St, London NW1 7LH. It runs from 12.30 – 4.00pm and will look at 'Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility'. It will examine the implications of proposals to increase the role of business in delivering skills training. It will also review how far employers are incorporating sustainability into their corporate responsibility and financial policies. Further details will be made available on the UCU website.

## 7. The Politics of Energy

The Energy Bill is still being debated in Parliament. The core point in the debate is the need for a target for 'decarbonisation' of our electricity supply. If that target is in the Bill, then it helps deliver on the Climate Act targets, it sends a clear message to the electricity industry and it provides a policy basis for investment that could lead to many thousands of new jobs in clean energy.

The Guardian article by Will Hutton 'Burn our planet or face financial meltdown' highlights the scale of the problem we are facing. A new report, 'Unburnable Carbon 2013', showed that stock markets worldwide are cumulatively valuing coal, oil and energy companies' huge reserves of fossil fuels *as if they will all be burned*, even though, at best, only 40% could ever be used if the world is to cap the increase in global temperatures by 2C this century. Further, in 2012, the top 200 energy companies spent \$674bn on finding new reserves, reinforcing the collective absurdity. In other words, there is either a carbon bubble with investors and companies wildly over-speculating on the value of owning fuel reserves that can never be burned, or nobody believes there is the remotest chance that the world will stick to the limits on fossil fuel use congruent with containing global warming.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/apr/21/carbon-problems-financial-crisis-hutton>

Either way this has massive implications for trades unions. The 'Trade unions for energy democracy' campaign has been set up to respond to this threat.

<http://energydemocracyinitiative.org/>

## 8. The Climate Crisis

An instrument near the summit of Mauna Loa in Hawaii has recorded a long-awaited climate milestone: the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere there has exceeded 400 parts per million (ppm) for the first time in 55 years of measurement—and probably more than 3 million years of Earth history.

The coverage from The Guardian is good:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/may/10/carbon-dioxide-highest-level-greenhouse-gas>. This also includes, at the end of the article, a link to an interactive set of slides.

## 9. 'Confronting the climate crisis' Conference

*A conference bringing together climate scientists, trade unionists and environmental activists  
11am - 5pm Saturday 8 June 2013, London Metropolitan University, 277-281 Holloway Road,  
London N7 8HN*

The Campaign Against Climate Change is campaigning for **One Million Climate Jobs** as a solution to the climate and economic crises. Their trade union group is hosting a conference to bring together leading climate scientists, trade unionists and environmental campaigners to discuss how best we can fight to stop global warming and create jobs.

The conference is also designed to brief trade unionists on the latest climate science. It will address questions such as "what is the significance of the Arctic ice melting" and "why is our weather strange"? Other workshops will discuss the fight for climate jobs and how trade unions can work with other campaigners over these issues.

Speakers include world renowned scientists Professor Kevin Anderson and Dr. Richard Allan. They will be joined by Joan Walley MP, the chair of the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, Manuel Cortez, Gen. Sec. of the TSSA, Chris Baugh, Ass. Gen. Sec of the PCS, Andreas Ytterstadt, Chair of the Union of Concerned Scientists Norway and Dr. Lara Skinner of Trade Unions for Energy Democracy in America.

This is a unique opportunity for trade union activists to discuss the threat of climate change and get involved in the wider environmental movement. The conference is supported by the FBU, CWU, TSSA, PCS. UCU and UNITE unions.

Registration is £10 waged, £5 unwaged. You can book online at [www.climateunion.eventbrite.com](http://www.climateunion.eventbrite.com) More information at [www.campaigncc.org](http://www.campaigncc.org) or contact 079 585 35231

## 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)**