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Welcome to the Sept/Oct newsletter. We wish all our readers every success in their efforts to mainstream sustainability into the education sector in 2013-14. Don't forget to keep us posted on any progress so that we can share it with others.

1. **UCU and the year ahead**

As the largest post-16 union in the education sector UCU has a crucial role to play in advancing the cause of a low carbon economy. The work is central to the knowledge and skills required by the current and future workforce. We plan to build on this by continuing to:

- **Support our environment reps** – UCU has more environment reps than any other trade union. We appreciate the time and effort that these officers put in to advance this crucial issue. We recognise the increasing difficulties encountered in juggling the role with other responsibilities. We will continue to press for institutional and statutory recognition to give staff a voice and ensure we have an environment rep in every branch.
- **Develop regional networks** – Linking with counterparts in the FHE sector. We will encourage contact with individuals inside and outside the sector. UCU will work with students, community activists and institutions to support engagement strategies that contribute to skills and jobs
- **Promote national alliances and campaign work** – There are many organisations who share our vision of a transition to a low carbon economy. We will continue to support the Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee, Greener Jobs Alliance, Sustainable Development Alliance for Learning and Skills, Green Skills Partnership, and the Campaign Against Climate Change. We will also participate in the work of single issue campaigns like the Energy Bill Revolution, and Carbon Bubble.
- **Provide a voice at international policy forums** – Ultimately a global solution to climate change is required. We are linked with a number of organisations who have a social justice focus. We aim to strengthen the trade union voice for sustainable development and decent jobs.

2. UCU Environment Reps Training

The next round of training for reps is November 7th-8th, 2013 at UCU Head Office. This will be followed by an additional day on March 17th, 2014 to enable participants to obtain accreditation for their work. For further information and to register please contact Karen Brooks, UCU Training Officer - kbrooks@ucu.org.uk

3. NUS Student Green Fund

Congratulations to those 25 student unions who have received funding from the new £5 million fund. UCU branches are urged to check the NUS site to see whether one of the institutions is in your area. If so, it could be a good opportunity to discuss ways of supporting each project.

<http://www.studentsgreenfund.org.uk/articles>

The successful bid in Sheffield is a great example of how UCU can help to initiate and support these bids. 'Sheffield on a Plate' was one of the 25 projects funded by the NUS Green Fund. It will raise sustainability awareness amongst students and staff in HE and FE through a focus on food. Not only is food a key sustainability issue, it is an increasing problem for students and poorer communities in Sheffield, reflected in a threefold increase in the number of food banks in Sheffield this year and increasing numbers of students using them.

The initiative came about after the Sheffield College UCU Green Rep approached both university student unions with a proposal for a joint project bid. The following collaboration was then extended to include other local organisations – the local food network 'Grow Sheffield' and Fareshare Yorkshire.

Val Petersen, UCU, reports: "We're delighted that our project bid was successful. This is the first ever environmentally-focused partnership between Sheffield's Universities and Colleges and we're hoping that this is only the start of a continued collaboration around environmental sustainability."

4. New NUS and TUC Protocol

The NUS and TUC recently signed a partnership agreement based on joint campaigning and support and sets out 10 ways in which students and unions will work together over the next year. It states that *"Our vision is underpinned by the principles of social justice and environmental sustainability."*

UCU is looking forward to the opportunity to apply this to the urgent need to mainstream these principles into the education sector.

<http://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/news/nus-and-tuc-agreement/>

5. LSIS Reports

The Learning Skills and Improvement Service closed last month. We will be working hard to press for its replacement the Education and Training Foundation to continue the strong sustainability focus that LSIS provided. Three new research reports are still available on the LSIS website and LSIS Excellence Gateway:

- **Embedding Sustainability in Teaching Learning and Curriculum:** This project aimed to explore the relevance of sustainability to education and training; to identify

the specific skills and knowledge that teaching staff require to embed sustainability; and to identify barriers, challenges and solutions.

<http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/27601>

- **Sustainability Skills for Growth:** This project aimed to explore sustainability skills, their relevance to employment, employers and business, and the opportunities challenges and barriers to the FE and skills sector in leading the development of those skills. <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/27602>
- **Springboards to Sustainability:** This project assessed the impact of the 13 projects completed in the 2012-13 round of the LSIS Stepping Up in Sustainability Fund, as well as the key ingredients for success that could inform others looking to take forward similar projects. <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/27603>

6. Skills for a Green Economy

UCU continues to work with the Greener Jobs Alliance to press for a coherent skills strategy. We will be attending the meeting called by the Green Economy Council Skills Project team in October. At this meeting we will be pressing for the implementation of the House of Commons Audit Committee calling for “a green skills strategy to ensure that skills and training are adequate to meet the aspirations of green economy policies”

In order to demonstrate how this can be done in practice we have been working with the Green Skills Partnership set up by Unionlearn. This has developed projects and materials that can be accessed on:

<http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/our-work-and-projects/skills-investment/skills-green-economy>

7. Ethical Investment Campaigns

Pensions – We are working with ShareAction to investigate how the 2 main pension funds in the sector can reduce their carbon impact. The Universities Superannuation Scheme (2nd largest in the UK) and Teachers Pension Scheme (AVC component) need to review their investment in high carbon portfolios. This autumn will see the launch of a campaign – Carbon Bubble - aimed at trustees and financial institutions.

<http://shareaction.org.uk/carbonbubble>

Fossil Free – We are supporting People & Planet’s Fossil Free Campaign. This is calling on universities to review their endowment, investment and research arrangements with fossil fuel companies. Meetings will take place with international speakers like Desmond Tutu, Naomi Klein and Bill McKibben in:

Edinburgh – October 30th

Birmingham – October 31st

London – November 1st

For further information and how to book tickets visit the P&P Fossil Free site;

<http://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free>

If you can’t get to these meetings then here’s a link to a recent article by Naomi Klein that’s worth a read:

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/sep/10/naomi-klein-green-groups-climate-deniers>

8. TUC Climate Change Conference

Green Growth: no turning back

Monday 21st October 2013, Congress House, London

This conference will consider what a genuinely low carbon future should look like. It will set out why we need to get there, consider what progress has been achieved to date and debate the way forward. Further details and register on the link below:

<https://greenconference2013.eventbrite.co.uk/>

9. Sustainability Exchange

Another useful resource from the EAUC is the free webinars programme. These are short, lunchtime webinars delivered to you through the Sustainability Exchange. Bringing together resources and experience from across the further and higher education sector and creating an online, information portal and community to share and be available to everyone. 'Exchange' webinars are the key to sharing some of these successes, with a broad collection of topics covering sustainable issues and ideas, there really is an 'exchange' webinar for everyone. Each webinar is hosted by a member of the EAUC team and presented live to up to 25 delegates. A recording is taken and then uploaded to the Sustainability Exchange as a permanent resource to be shared with all users.

Log in now! Visit www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk

9. More Resources

Anti austerity and Climate Change

For a useful leaflet on climate change and current economic policies go to:

<http://www.campaigncc.org/sites/www.campaigncc.org/files/People%27s%20assembly%20flier%20-%20climate%20jobs.pdf>

Railways and climate change

For another useful leaflet on transport policy go to:

<http://www.campaigncc.org/sites/www.campaigncc.org/files/trains%20and%20climate%20change.pdf>

Shell and Climate Change

Finally for a short video on a great Greenpeace stunt at the Belgian Grand Prix go to:

<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/blog/climate/banned-video-our-shell-belgian-grand-prix-protest-20130827>

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:

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