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Welcome to the last newsletter for 2014-15. It's been a busy year for the UCU with sustainability rising up the workplace agenda and more members taking on the role of environment rep. Have a good break and we will be back with you again in September as the momentum builds for the climate talks in Paris at the end of the year.

1. UCU Environment Rep update

Regional news – During 2014-15 we held a series of discussions with regional and national committees. It was agreed that guidance on appointment of new reps was needed. This will be produced for the next newsletter and sent out to all branches in September. By the end of the calendar year we hope to have visited all 13 national and regional committees to promote the appointment of at least one rep per branch. Remember to put appointment of an Environment Rep on the agenda of the AGM or next branch meeting.

Rep training – The new 3 day course has been converted into a blended learning option to make it easier for reps to enrol. The next one for new and existing reps is scheduled for 1 day at UCU Head Office on **Tuesday, 19 January 2016** followed by 2 days on-line to provide for completion by the end of the summer term. If you are interested please contact Karen Brooks, UCU National Training Officer to register on kbrooks@ucu.org.uk

UCU Rep wins award – In the last newsletter (issue 40) we carried a report from Elaine Ball the Branch Environment Rep at Salford University. Subsequently her work in the school of Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work & Social Sciences won the Innovation and Engagement Award. She was nominated for engaging staff and students in a range of initiatives to reduce energy consumption and generate an awareness of environmentally friendly issues within the college. Elaine also worked with three Green Impact project assistants throughout the cycle, allowing these students to gain valuable work experience

2. Ethical Investment and Divestment

Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) – The meeting for UCU USS members on Ethical Investment, arranged for June, has been postponed until 7 October. There are places for up to 50 people so please register on this link to ensure your branch is represented: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/uss-ethical-investment>

Another divestment victory and more on the way... This month the University of Warwick has committed to investing its money in funds that exclude fossil fuel companies. Campaigners rejoiced as Warwick followed Glasgow, SOAS and Bedfordshire in divesting from fossil fuels. Oxford, Edinburgh and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Disease have also pledged to rid themselves of some of their investments but have yet to commit to fully divest from fossil fuels:

<http://gofossilfree.org/uk/press-release/university-of-warwick-commits-to-divest-from-fossil-fuels/>

Other universities are also in the spotlight. The Student Union at the University of East Anglia is running a divestment campaign and their open letter has received support from nearly 100 academics. Find out more about their divestment campaign on the SU website:

<http://www.ueastudent.com/articles/movement-for-divestment-at-uea-grows-95-academics-join-the-campaign>

3. Fracking update

Lancashire County Council has rejected two fracking applications from Cuadrilla. This is a fantastic result for the communities and campaigners. The successful campaign very much centred on the passion and commitment of Frack Free Lancashire which finally gave Councillors the confidence to decide in favour of the campaigners. As the campaign came to a climax, trade unions again responded to the call for support, providing a number of speakers at rallies in Preston, including Michael McKrell, UCU Branch Officer at the University of Central Lancashire: <http://frackfreelancashire.org.uk/cms/>

The breadth of support given to this campaign makes it clear that a wider understanding of interlocking issues, principally around climate change and One Million Climate Jobs, is now being taken on board by many who perhaps initially saw themselves as concerned 'only' about fracking.

4. To Paris and beyond....

Climate Jobs - On September 19 there will be a conference in Sheffield for trade unionists and climate activists, linking up opportunities for climate action - divesting from fossil fuels, investing in climate jobs and planning for the Paris climate talks. Find out more and don't forget that local branches and national unions can affiliate to the Campaign against Climate Change: <http://www.campaigncc.org/sheffclimatejobs>

Have you got **Sunday 29 November** in your diary? A huge protest will be taking place in London on the eve of the crucial UN climate talks in Paris. It will be a weekend of unprecedented climate action, with mass mobilisations in Paris and other major cities around the world. In the UK, demonstrations are also planned in Edinburgh and Cardiff. Across the globe, protestors will be united with one voice, calling for a strong climate deal, a fair deal and a one that faces up to the reality of climate science.

As well as the UK protests, many people will travel to Paris. Transport will be organised mainly for the last weekend, 12 December. This is because we need a show of strength from the climate movement if there is a weak, inadequate deal. After Copenhagen, dashed hopes weakened the climate movement. Not this time - the message from civil society, is "whatever happens, we fight on for the climate".

5. International union networks

UCU has been involved in the setting up a network of education unions through the global federation Education International. Resources on education for sustainable development are available through this portal:

https://portal.ei-ie.org/SiteDirectory/Education_for_Sustainable_Development_Network/Resources/Forms/AllItems.aspx

ITUC Conference in Paris – UCU members will be attending the trade union conference on September 13-14 called to plan for the Paris summit. Governments around the world are lagging behind urgent demands to address climate change, with people voicing overwhelming support – particularly in developing countries – for immediate action, the latest ITUC poll revealed.

Nine out of ten people across the globe are demanding their elected leaders do more to prevent the world's population from being impacted by the effects of man-made global warming, the latest International Trade Union Confederation Frontlines Poll showed. Read the full ITUC Frontlines Poll here:

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-frontlines-poll-special-topic-16271>

Global Labour Institute – The Greener Jobs Alliance sponsored a couple of UCU members at this year's summer school at Northern College in July. Here's a report from Jo Ram one of the attendees:

As a new member of UCU, I wasn't sure what to expect at the GLI Summer School. I had an incredibly inspiring week. I had the privilege to meet activists from all over the world. I learnt about sex workers organising in France, informal workers organising in the Global South, and the ways in which the trade union movement and the climate movement are starting to unite. I met young UK activists determined to reinvigorate the trade union movement. Both as a climate activist and as an early career academic in precarious labour situations, I am now raring to become more active with UCU.

6. The budget and the green economy

The 'emergency budget' this month was a major set-back for clean energy and the climate, with shameless tax breaks to oil and gas companies confirmed alongside a shocking £3.9 billion tax grab on renewable energy over the next six years. In a side-swipe, vehicle excise duty was also 'reformed' to remove incentives for less polluting cars, and set aside to build new roads.

<http://www.campaigncc.org/emergencybudget>

<http://touchstoneblog.org.uk/2015/07/osbornes-ugly-political-debate-on-green-subsidies-spooks-investors/>

7. Health and Climate Change

The 2015 *Lancet* Commission on Health and Climate Change maps out the impacts of climate change, and the necessary policy responses, to ensure the highest attainable standards of health for populations worldwide. The central finding from the Commission is that tackling climate change could be the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century:

<http://www.thelancet.com/commissions/climate-change-2015>

8. Calendar of events and resources

With so much happening on the sustainability agenda it's hard to keep up with everything. One method is to sign up for Tree alerts that include a calendar of key events for the next 6 months as well as breaking news:

<http://treealerts.org/forecast/>

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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