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A warm welcome to Graham Petersen the new editor and co-ordinator of our environmental work and newsletter here at UCU. Graham can be reached at: graham.petersen@south-thames.ac.uk

1. Environment Reps

The campaign to get statutory recognition for environment reps continues. There have been early day motions in the House of Commons and European Parliament. UCU can't wait until the government wakes up to the fact that this would be a major step forward in making sure that green policies and pledges are put into action. In a number of colleges and universities reps have already been recognised. For example, at South Thames College, the following proposal was accepted by the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee:

Climate change is a major concern with potentially huge economic consequences. Over half of carbon emissions are work-related and so workplaces have a clear responsibility to implement effective measures. UCU feels that a formal recognition of union environment reps will assist STC to develop and obtain support for these measures. We therefore request that the following paragraph is adopted and added to the STC Environment Policy:

Workplace Environmental Reps

South Thames College recognises that union reps play a key role in encouraging employee engagement. Union environmental reps can act as a conduit between management and staff, feeding concerns, suggestions and responses in both directions, and working with the workforce and management to develop best environmental practice, particularly in estates and human resource management. They can help review or shape environmental policies and initiatives, and ensure that such policies are properly understood, fit for purpose, and can be put into practical effect at each workplace. UCU Environmental Reps will:

- *attend meetings of the STC Environment sub-group and Health, Safety and Environment Committee*
- *promote environmentally sustainable workplace initiatives and practices*
- *be consulted on workplace environmental policies and management systems*
- *participate in environmental risk assessments*
- *participate in environmental audits*
- *promote environmental training opportunities within STC curriculum areas*
- *such other activities that will enhance the contribution STC can make to a sustainable workplace*

UCU branches and associations are urged to seek a meeting with their employer to try and get similar recognition arrangements in place. Please send details of any developments to **Graham Petersen**.

2. ACAS Code

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service have issued a revised version of the 'Time off for trade union duties' code for consultation. For the first time there is a reference to Environment Reps and employers are urged to provide support and facilities. However, this is just contained in the guidance and not the code of practice. UCU has submitted comments along the lines that this is no substitute for statutory recognition. The consultation closes on March 16th, 2009

Consultation on time off for trade union duties and activities

At the request of the Minister of State for Employment Relations and Postal Affairs, Pat McFadden MP, ACAS has revised the *Code of Practice on Time off for Trade Union Duties and Activities* and produced an accompanying Guide entitled *Developing Effective Employee Representation: A guide to managing provisions for time off, training and facilities*.



Further information:

The deadline for comment on the revised draft code and draft guidance is

16 March 2009.

Web link: www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2122

3. Reports

Go Green Conference

People and Planet, the student campaigning network held a very useful seminar on Jan. 31st to discuss their Green League table for universities. The table has been an important driver towards improvements in environment management in HE. UCU are considering whether something similar in FE would be worth promoting.

Alliance for Science: TUC Seminar, with Lord Paul Drayson Science Minister

This TUC event held February 18th with Lord Paul Drayson, Science Minister, is the start of a series of seminars to consider the way forward for science putting the trade unions priorities forward. In attendance were representatives of TUC, UCU, Unite, ATL, Prospect and GMB. The TUC promoted its thoughts that the emerging green area should generate high quality jobs and that it had identified 31 sectors for accelerated growth. During this meeting Paul Drayson detailed his views on the direction that UK science and resultant high tech' manufacturing might be directed, he identified three focus areas Clean Briton, Digital Briton, Healthy Briton. The ministers past science and manufacturing background were refreshingly evident in his replies. Paul highlighted that it was imperative that a plan be thrashed out this year and proposed a "debate on science".

UCU attended both events and you can read our reports at:

www.ucu.org.uk/environmentlatest

4. Training

Course one:

The TUC are running courses for union environment reps and others who are interested in taking on the role.

The course will help union reps to:

- Identify environmental changes affecting the workplace
- Research and identify appropriate environmental legislation, policies and information
- Identify environmental problems and opportunities for trade union action.

The next courses will be:

2 day course on March 25th and April 3rd at South Thames College. The course application form is attached to this mailing.

For more information visit:

www.unionlearn.org.uk/courses/index.cfm/citem/4707.

Course two:

Trade Unions and the Environment a 2-day course on July 9th and 16th at the College of North East London.

For more information visit:

www.tradeunioneducation.net or contact Alison Foster at Trade Union Education, College of North East London on 0208 442 3075

5. Environment skills

A Study published in June, 2008 confirmed that skills weaknesses may mean that the government experiences major difficulties in meeting its renewable energy targets. The UK needs to create between 122,000 – 133,000 jobs between now and 2020 if targets are to be met.

For example there are not enough engineering graduates for the renewables / energy sector. UCU will be campaigning to ensure that greening the curriculum is a priority for both sectors.

6. LRD Survey

The TUC and its affiliated unions have asked the Labour Research Department (LRD) to carry out a survey on climate change and the workplace. They hope to find examples of union workplace action on global warming and to identify the problems faced by union reps and activists in this area. The survey will contribute to union campaigning and publications on the environment.

The survey will be live for one month and the results will be published in early June.

The survey can only be accessed via the LRD's website at the following link:

www.lrd.org.uk/surveys/climate/

7. HEFCE Sustainable Development Strategy

A new plan to put higher education at the forefront of society's efforts to achieve sustainability has been published today by HEFCE.

HEFCE's sustainable development strategy and action plan recognises that the HE sector can make a substantial and exemplary contribution to the challenge of sustainable development. This can be achieved through the skills and knowledge that its graduates learn and put into practice, its research and exchange of knowledge through business, community and public policy engagement, and through its own strategies and operations.

The updated 2008 strategy and action plan follows feedback received through the consultation document **HEFCE 2008/18**.

Steve Egan, HEFCE's Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, and Deputy Chief Executive, said:

'We want to make sustainable development a central part of our strategy for the future development of the HE sector. The sustainable development action plan is an invaluable resource for HEIs to help them realise this vision. It will help them to build on their existing performance, as well as to support their future commitments such as linking capital funding to carbon performance to combat climate change. We are keen to work in collaboration with Government, the sector and other stakeholders to support and hasten this change.'

'Whilst much has been achieved we are mindful of the considerable challenges that lie ahead and are ready to play our full part.'

The new plan, 'Sustainable development in higher education: 2008 update to strategic statement and action plan' **HEFCE 2009/03** is available.

More on **HEFCE's plans for linking capital funding to carbon performance**
More on **HEFCE's work on sustainable development**

8. Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland

Scotland's universities and colleges have publicly declared their intention to address the challenges of climate change and reduce their carbon footprints by signing the Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland (UCCCCS).

To date, 38 institutions have agreed to sign the Commitment, constituting over 60% of universities and colleges in Scotland. Signatories are committed to producing and publishing a 5-year Climate Change Action Plan by January 2010. Plans will include measurable targets and timescales to achieve a significant reduction in emissions from all business operations and activities, including:

- Energy consumption and source
- Waste reduction, recycling and responsible disposal
- Sustainable estate development
- Sustainable travel planning
- Responsible procurement of goods and services

Institutions will incorporate work on climate change into established improvement processes and will publish annual results on progress, detailing outcomes achieved and further actions required. This initiative has been conducted in consultation with the unions and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) is on the advisory panel.

For more information visit:

www.eauc.org.uk/scotlands_principals_climate_commitment

9. Events

If you would like to attend any of the following events, please let me know. UCU will send up to four delegates and meet 'reasonable expenses'. Please let us know in advance if travelling to this event would involve substantial outlay for the union. You will be expected to write a short report of events attended

Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Campaign against climate change trade union group

2nd Trade Union Conference

Saturday 7th March 2009

King's College London, Franklin-Wilkins Building, Stamford Street, London

The huge social and economic changes that are needed to dramatically reduce carbon emissions are of vital interest to trade unionists, as are the methods by which they can be achieved. This conference is a chance to engage and debate with each other on the se crucial issues. Campaigners and researchers from the trade union movement will address a series of workshops on a variety of related issues.

As the world looks forward to the signing of the Kyoto Treaty's replacement later this year, our closing plenary will look at proposals for a new treaty and how trade unionists can support and join the international protests calling on world governments to sign a climate treaty that will have social justice at its heart.

Further information available at: www.campaigncc.org

**Facing Climate Change – the Centre for Psycho-Social Studies
A one day conference**

Saturday 7th March 2009

University of the West of England, Frenchay Campus, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol

The evidence is now irrefutable that man-made climate change poses a huge and unprecedented threat to the global ecosystem and therefore to ourselves. Combined with the fact of "peak oil", this means that our future depends on how proactive, imaginative and courageous we can be in dealing with our addiction to fossil fuels.

Further information available at:

www.uwe.ac.uk/hlss/research/cpss/index.shtml or

www.uwe.ac.uk/hlss/research/cpss/events/2008/climate_change.pdf

March for Jobs, Justice and Climate

Saturday 28th March 2009

Central London

The 'Put People First' demonstration on the eve of April's G20 summit will urge world leaders to focus their efforts on supporting jobs, promoting social justice and tackling climate change.

The TUC has joined almost 30 organisations including Oxfam, Friends of the Earth, and Save the Children to organise the demonstration on Saturday 28 March. It will gather along the Embankment in central London from 11 am and proceed at noon to a rally in Hyde Park.

Further information available at: www.putpeoplefirst.org.uk/

Read the TUC press release at: www.tuc.org.uk/newsroom/tuc-16004-f0.cfm

Climate Camp

Wednesday 1st April 2009

European Climate Exchange, Hasilwood House, 62 Bishopsgate, London

Climate Camp is calling on supporters to join them in the City of London on April Fools Day, the eve of the G20 Leaders' Summit.

Further information available at: www.climatecamp.org.uk/g20

EUAC Conference

Tuesday 31st March – Thursday 2nd April 2009

University of Warwick Coventry CV4 7AL

The Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges will be holding its annual conference from March 31st – April 2nd at the University of Warwick.

Further information available at: www.eauc.org.uk/home

TUC Green Growth Conference

Monday 27 April 2009

Congress House, Great Russell Square, London

The TUC is holding a national one-day conference and debate around the trade union response to the two great challenges of 2009 - economic recovery and climate change.

The conference is to be held at Congress House on Monday 27 April 2009, and will be addressed by trade unionists, climate change experts and government ministers. There will also be six themed workshops, and a Green New Deal debate with an expert panel.

Further information available at:

www.tuc.org.uk/theme/index.cfm?theme=sustainableworkplace

Join UCU's environment network and let us know how what steps your branch is taking to bring address the issue of workplace reps, implementing policy and seeking recognition agreements with employers. Send reports to [Graham Petersen](#)