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1. UCU Congress 2009

**Environment Fringe
Wednesday (18:00-19:00)
'Climate Change: What's work got to do with it?'
Branksome Suite**

Chaired by Malcolm Povey (NEC), this meeting will provide an opportunity to find out about how the 'green agenda' is being implemented in the FE and HE sectors. Delegates will be informed about what the employers are doing as well as the initiatives UCU are promoting.

Climate Change Action Plans: Andrew Chamberlain, Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC)

Andrew is the Scotland Manager of the EAUC. He has been spearheading the Universities, Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland (UCCCfS) that lays down a framework for implementing environment action plans.

UCU Environment Strategy: Graham Petersen, UCU Environmental Co-ordinator

The motion below will be debated. If it is passed we hope it will provide a policy basis to take us forward for what will be 12 crucial months either side of the Copenhagen summit in December, 2009.

Environment

This branch recognises the importance of the UCU increasing its profile on environmental issues.

In particular with:

1. Employers – Improving environment management in the workplace
2. Staff – Identifying opportunities to raise employee awareness
3. Students – Linking with campaign organisations like People and Planet
4. Sector bodies – Strengthening links with bodies like HEFCE, EAUC, and Government departments to develop policy in areas like 'greening the curriculum'
5. Public – Supporting campaigns that strengthen the profile of the trade union movement in relation to 'anti-environment measures' like Heathrow expansion

UCU will need to:

1. Promote the role of UCU environment reps and seek formal recognition within institutions
2. Provide environment courses in the 2009-10 reps training programme
3. Organise a 1 day conference in late 2009 to help co-ordinate strategy.
4. Liaise with other unions to map out the skills and jobs needed in a 'green new deal' prior to the Copenhagen summit

(150 words)

South Thames College UCU Branch

We will have a joint stall with the Health and Safety unit. If you want to come along and have a chat during the breaks then we will be pleased to see you. Leave your contact details if there is no one staffing the stall, and we will be in touch.

2. Student Links

Linking up with the students in your college / university will be one of the best ways to put pressure on your institution to sharpen up its act. Last month UCU had a meeting at Head Office with Susan Nash, the new NUS officer with responsibility for the environment. A number of areas of joint interest were explored, and it was agreed to issue a joint communiqué on World Environment Day – June 5th, 2009.

We also liaised with student-based organisation – People and Planet. They are planning events for 20 June. They are holding a day to celebrate the end of exams and get ready for another year of campaigning. Check if any events are planned in your workplace.

<http://peopleandplanet.org/summercampaignsday>

Also in the HE sector check where your institution got placed in their Green League table. Results are due out in June visit <http://peopleandplanet.org/greenleague>

In FE and schools P&P has produced a handy Go Green Action Guide, visit <http://peopleandplanet.org/dl/gogreen6ffeactionguide0809.pdf>

3. Green Skills

With all the government talk of a 'Green New Deal' to respond to the recession, you'd think green skills would be high up the agenda. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The performance is patchy but overall the 25 Sector Skills Councils have failed to meet this challenge.

DIUS has responded constructively, if more slowly than the UCU would like, to the Defra report on *Skills for a Low carbon, Resource-efficient Economy*. The TUC was involved in the steering group that produced this study, and supports its critique of the demand-led model of skills provision.

There is also a need for influencing and persuasion skills (as with the role currently being played by the UCU environmental workplace reps). So both technical green skills, and behaviour/cultural change skills are needed.

Government has to take a lead to make the skills system work better. All SSCs should do more to drive green skills and green behaviours in their sectors - both green technical skills but also influencing, awareness raising skills. The Government should also assess and take account of the role of union involvement at work to help accelerate behavioural change.

UCU delegates attended the TUC Green Growth Conference on April 27th which discussed this issue.

We are uniquely placed to influence the debate about how FE and HE deliver both the technical and influencing skills needed. At a time when many institutions are threatening redundancies it is a topic that also links with our other sector industrial relations priorities.

TUC Green Workplace News

If you can't get enough newsletters on unions and the environment then check out the TUC version <http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-16445-f0.cfm>

4. LRD Survey

June 9th, 2009 will be the launch date of the Labour Research Department Survey and new environment publication. UCU members were one of the largest groups of respondents with 174 replies. We will provide a full report of the findings in the next newsletter but it is clear from the initial results that this is a high priority for the UCU with 57.5 % saying they were more concerned about climate change compared to a year ago, with only 3.4% indicating that they were less concerned.

5. UCU Climate Action Groups – Project Update

Thanks to all those activists on the mailing list who expressed an interest in the UCU project that has been submitted for DEFRA funding. We should know by the end of this month the outcome of the bid. If the bid does succeed it will provide us with resources to help establish Climate Action Groups in both sectors

6. Environmental Training

A new TUC workbook will be launched in June that can be used on UCU training courses.

**Trade Unions and the Environment
'Together we can tackle climate change'**

**2 day TUC course at South Thames College, Putney, London
June 15 – 16 2009
09:30 – 16:30**

Course application forms and further information will be available from the stand at Congress or via the following link at

<http://www.south-thames.ac.uk/Faculties/ViewFaculty.aspx?id=18>

7. Events

World Environment Day Friday June 5 2009

A good opportunity to organise something in your workplace!
If you do, let us know how it went. It could be inspirational for other UCU activists.

TUC's Annual Green Workplaces half-day workshop Tuesday June 9 2009

This is a chance for activists to compare what is happening in different workplaces and unions. To register for the event visit the site below.

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-16445-f0.cfm?theme=sustainableworkplace>

Green Action at Work Camp July 15 – 19 2009

The camp will be in the field next to the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Museum and Cottages in the small village of Tolpuddle in Dorset. Participants are expected to provide their own tents. Toilets and hot showers are provided.

Campaign Against Climate Change Demonstration December 5 2009, London

As part of the international campaign around the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit starting in Copenhagen the following week. One to put in the diary now. Visit the website at

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

UCU Environment Network

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 at graham.petersen@south-thames.ac.uk