

Where we are on PAY

Members voted in the national ballot by 3912 votes to 3780 (50.9% to 49.1%) not to take strike action this year to seek improvement to the national pay offer for 2009/10. The UCU national further education committee (FEC) has therefore now unanimously agreed to accept the 1.5% pay offer for this year.

The national employers will be informed that in accepting the offer we continue to have major concerns that this is a step backward on recent progress towards pay parity with schoolteacher. This will have to be addressed in future awards but we now expect that colleges should now honour the settlement in full.

There was a very close vote in the ballot but members clearly feel that in the context of the recession, and mounting threats to job security in the sector, pay was not the issue to fight on at the moment.

The officers of the FEC have issued a statement to all members which can be found at: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/fepayengland>

What Next?

On pay the FEC has agreed the following strategy:

- Branches will seek confirmation that the 1.5% is paid and urged to mount campaigns up to industrial action if this is not the case.
- The national union will co-ordinate any such local action and campaign alongside the other FE trade unions wherever possible.
- The IOU campaign will continue to get national pay rates in all colleges.
A joint pay claim for 2010/11, which will include a catch up element to meet this year's shortfall will be drawn up next month and submitted in March.
- With other trade unions across the public sector, seek to build an alliance for action against any pay freeze and/or attacks on public sector pensions.

But recognising the other crucial issues facing members, the focus of activity for the coming months will be:

- Fighting against job losses and campaigning in defence of the sector against possible devastating funding cuts. (See the details below of the national lobby of parliament)
- Developing branch activity to tackle excessive workloads and bullying
- Seeking to organise instructor/trainer/associate teacher staff with a view to improving pay and conditions
- Working with branches to improve their strength and organisation

Lobby of Parliament

On Tuesday 26 January UCU will be holding a lobby of Parliament to let MPs know what is happening in further and higher education and to make sure the voices of UCU members are heard in the 'corridors of power' in the run up to the general election. As well as highlighting our industrial agenda, we will also be launching our alternative vision for education, with our post-16 education manifesto. Between 2:30pm and 4:30pm on 26 January, there will be speeches from MPs, trade unionists and educators.

Although the speeches will continue for two hours, members should do their best to meet their MPs whenever possible. MPs are very busy and their diaries often fill up weeks in advance. Although the House authorities will do everything they can to find your MP, it may not be possible, so try to book in advance.

A briefing on lobbying your MP can be found here:

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/3/7/ucu_lobbybriefing.pdf