

Contents

1. **Save the date: *Defence of Public Education Conference, Saturday 10 March 2012* – University of London Union, Malet Street**
 2. **HE in FE survey**
 3. **Admissions process review consultation – send us your comments**
 4. **Policy in Scotland**
 5. **UCU survey on members' perceptions of student behaviour**
 6. **Further education funding and governance**
 7. **UCU guidance on the Research Excellence Framework**
 8. **Further education consultations**
 9. **Policy in Wales**
 10. **UCU-LSIS-UNISON FE Staff Governors Conference, Thursday 24 November 2011**
 11. **HE Teacher Educators' Seminar, Wednesday 9 November 2011**
 12. **Policy in Northern Ireland**
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1. Save the date: *Defence of Public Education Conference, Saturday 10 March 2012* – University of London Union, Malet Street

The union will be holding a major conference on the defence of public education in London on Saturday 10 March 2012.

Its aim is to bring together unions, students and organisations with an interest in defending our education system from cuts, privatisation and the institutionalisation of social inequality. The conference will include speakers on the break-up of the school system, the attacks on further, adult, prison and ESOL education at a time of rising unemployment, and on the abject poverty of the government's vision for the future of higher education.

There will be an opportunity for delegates to discuss how we can most effectively unite around a principled defence of our education system.

Attendance at the conference will be free for all UCU members.

Please register your interest in attending now by contacting Sue Bajwa at sbajwa@ucu.org.uk.

2. HE in FE survey

As part of UCU's work related to higher education in further education colleges, the policy department is surveying more than 120 FECs in England on this topic.

Using the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act, UCU in mid-November emailed the FoI officer of each FE college receiving direct teaching grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England in 2011-12, asking them to respond to an online questionnaire.

The questionnaire covers a range of topics. These include: the number and percentage of teachers engaged in providing higher education at the college; whether the college has a different pay structure for those teaching higher education; the number of hours of teaching contact time expected of full-time FE and HE in FE teachers at the college; the college's definition of scholarly activity; the college's support for continuing professional development for staff involved in teaching higher education; the promotion of scholarly activity through reduced contact time to allow for study, payment of degree fees, or attendance at conferences; support for membership of professional bodies; support enabling those teaching higher education to keep their subject knowledge up to date; policy on enabling those teaching higher education to keep their pedagogical skills up to date; the HE in FE subject areas taught at the college; learner:teacher ratios in HE and FE; expenditure on resources per learner; teachers' employment contracts; and job evaluation relating to HE in FE teachers.

The colleges are expected to respond by the end of 2011. The report of the survey will be produced early in 2012.

3. Admissions process review consultation – send us your comments

UCAS are currently consulting over proposed changes to the admissions system in higher education. In essence, they are proposing a new system whereby applicants would apply only with known grades. A 'post-results' system would require changes to the A level examinations timetable, and in particular, the need for the exams to start 15 days earlier than at present. Given the impact on schools, colleges and universities, the earliest date that a post-results system would apply is for the 2016 year of entry.

The consultation document is on the UCAS website at:

<http://www.ucas.com/reviews/admissionsprocessreview/>

We would welcome your comments on the proposed changes to the admissions process, both in relation to the FE college timetable and the impact on 'fair access' to higher education. Please can you email comments to Paul Cottrell (pcottrell@ucu.org.uk) by 9 January 2012.

4. Policy in Scotland

Governance Review

UCU Scotland has given oral evidence to a review of governance, which is to report by the end of the year, using examples of good and bad practice in governance and called for an overhaul of governing bodies to increase democracy and the involvement of staff. The breakdown of the collegiate structures with senior staff now appointed had weakened the link between Senate and staff it was pointed out. UCU Scotland representatives also highlighted the lack of transparency in appointments to the governing body and in remuneration of senior management, calling for greater staff involvement in relevant committees. Finally it was pointed out that the reform of governance should be ongoing and ongoing research on the evidence base for higher education was required.

Legislative Consultation

The Scottish Government is consulting on a bill for both higher and further education to be introduced by the end of 2012. UCU is drafting a response to the wide ranging consultation with input from the committees of UCU Scotland. As part of the consultation process UCU Scotland Officers has met with the Scottish Government officials. In the meetings, UCU reiterated the value of funding good research wherever that takes place in response to the plan for increasing concentration in research funding. On the introduction of a student partnership agreement UCU were reassured that the English model would not be adopted in Scotland and that the proposal is about increasing student involvement in decision making.

Fees for rest of UK students

The legislation to allow Scottish universities to charge fees for rest of UK students has been introduced in the Scottish Parliament and passed by the Education Committee. This legislation removes RUK students from the legislation that limits fee levels but does not introduce a new limit or any other legislation to protect such students. However, all universities have kept to the voluntary ceiling of £9000 per year. In evidence to the committee the Minister lamented the fact that universities had not shown restraint in setting fees with two having the most expensive degrees in the UK at £36000 for the four year degree.

5. UCU survey on members' perceptions of student behaviour

UCU was successful in bidding for funds from LSIS to work on a model whole college behaviour policy. Student behaviour is one of the main issues that UCU members complain about. The aim of the project is to develop policies around behaviour that are consistent and coherent throughout the college, and stress the promotion of good behaviour. Part of the project is to survey UCU members as to their perceptions of student behaviour and their strategies for dealing with this. If you would like to complete the survey it can be found at:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/wholecollegetpolicy>

6. Further education funding and governance

Funding

Since the last Policy News two publications on funding have been released: a consultation on 16-19 funding and a document from the SFA on simplification of adult learning funding methodology.

The changes proposed in both documents will not be implemented until 2013-2014, The YPLA document can be found on <http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/>. The document should be read together with the consultation document on Study Programmes.

The 16-19 funding consultation aims to introduce a 'simpler and more transparent' methodology. The proposals in the consultation cover a number of options with suggested advantages and disadvantages, with a proposal to align disadvantage funding more closely with the pre-16 pupil premium; simplifying participation funding, to move away from funding an aggregation of the qualifications studying; 'fairly' allocate funding to full and part time learners; streamlining the way government addresses the different costs in some provision, and how all of this can be applied to programmes of study; possibly removing the success factor from the funding formula, or treating achievement and retention separately.

The SFA document can be found on <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/>. This proposes simplifying the funding formula, rates, and developing a single earnings methodology. There will be new arrangements for funding Additional Learning Support and disadvantage. There should be a single funding system and set of rules with a funding formula applied across the adult skills system. There would be no provider factor; rates for learning aims expressed as cash; a single methodology based on programme instalments and an achievement element and a single budget for ALS and streamlined learner support funds.

Funding allocations for 2012-2013 should be known in the New Year. Provisional adult learning allocations should be with colleges in January. The YPLA allocations will be first expressed in numbers based on last year's enrolments. This will then be converted into cash allocations when the YPLA know how many student numbers they will have to fund. Details of next year's funding and questions to ask local college managements will be produced and disseminated as soon as the funding details as known.

Governance

One of the main government policies towards FE is giving colleges far more freedoms and flexibilities to meet the learning needs of the communities they serve. There have been recent developments around both these policies and both were featured heavily in presentations to the recent AoC Conference. There was a great emphasis on deregulating colleges. SFA CEO Geoff Russell made four points to the conference: that the FE marketplace (sic) will have less regulation and bureaucracy, but also less security; that success will be measured in outcomes for customers not targets from the state; that colleges will need to behave like independent training providers to survive; independent training providers will

need to act like colleges to thrive and that colleges will compete across the entire spectrum of the education market, both domestically and internationally, and will look very little as they do now.

Signs of this new approach were seen in a surprise late amendment to the Education Bill as it was finishing its passage in the Lords. An amendment was proposed with no consultation to remove the requirement that college corporations would be required to have staff and student governors. UCU, NUS and UNISON lobbied hard against this amendment and were successful in having it removed and replaced with another amendment that will continue to require college governing bodies to have staff and student governors. However the Education Bill, now an Act, also had clauses that will remove constraints on college borrowing powers and powers to set up companies and will remove the SFA's power to appoint governors. Colleges will be able to modify and replace the existing Instruments and Articles of Governance against a light touch legislative framework. Colleges will have the power to dissolve themselves and enter into new partnerships, relationships including mergers after consultation but no longer having to have the Secretary of State's approval.

7. UCU guidance on the Research Excellence Framework

Over the next twelve months a key issue facing HE branches and local associations will be the selection of academic staff for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). A recent UCU circular outlines the new assessment framework and guidance for the REF. In particular, the circular focuses on the code of practice on the selection of staff, in which there may be a role for UCU branches to advise and protect members in the submission process.

For further details, click on:

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/UCUHE118.rtf

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/pdf/UCUHE118.pdf

8. Further education consultations

FE consultations

As reported in the last Policy News, there has been a steady stream of consultations from the DfE on recommendations stemming from the Wolf Report on vocational education for young people, from the SFA on changes to various aspects of FE, including governance, new structures, funding, teaching and learning and from BIS on FE loans and informal adult and community learning. There has also been a consultation by OFSTED on a revised Common Inspection Framework for post 16 providers which is to be implemented from September 2012. There are two consultations still open: one on 16-18 funding and one of 16-19 study programmes. The government's proposals following the BIS consultations is likely to be known in early December.

UCU Responses

UCU has submitted its views to the following consultations. These can be obtained from the Policy Department at dhendry@ucu.org.uk:

- BIS New Challenges New Choices: next steps in implementing the further education reform programme
- BIS FE Loans
- BIS Informal adult and community learning
- DfE Vocational qualifications and Performance Tables
- DfE Proposals to allow QTLS Holders to teach in schools
- DfE Care to learn: changes to the scheme that provides childcare costs to young parents
- OFSTED Consultation on a revised Post-16 Common Inspection Framework
- OFQUAL Proposals to change GCSEs.

The UCU responses to the DfE consultations on 16-19 funding and study programmes will be available in the new year.

9. Policy in Wales

Further Education Governance Ministerial Statement

On Tuesday 22 November 2011 the Minister for Education and Skills, Leighton Andrews AM, made a statement on his plans for reform of further education governance. His statement follows a formal consultation of Rob Humphreys' task and finish group review into FE Governance.

The Minister confirmed he would implement the recommendations of the review with one amendment to ensure that there were two reserved places for learners on governing bodies. There would be a new membership body where stakeholders would have the opportunity to engage in the governance structures of the institution. New boards would be smaller in number.

Opposition spokespeople responded by voicing UCU's concerns with regards to the removal of staff governors from governing bodies. Although the Minister noted that staff could be elected through the new membership bodies, he did not categorically state that there would be no staff governors. UCU Wales will continue to lobby to ensure staff governors are included on the White Paper for the bill, which is due next summer.

Education White Paper

The Welsh Government has recently issued their White Paper for School Organisation and Standards Bill (Wales) 2012. Whilst much of the White Paper focuses upon issues that aren't of interest to UCU Wales, we have submitted a brief consultation response highlighting issues around Welsh medium training provision for staff and guidance on counselling services for learners, as a result of the Learning and Skills Measure 2009.

Part Time HE Funding Delayed to 2013-14

A recent consultation conducted by the Welsh Government on changes to funding for part time students in Wales had revealed several implications as identified by a number of stakeholders. Proposals were due to be implemented for 2012-13, in line with other changes

to funding in higher education, but as a result this has now been moved back to 2013-14 to resolve any issues with the proposals.

Future Structures of Universities in Wales

The Minister for Education and Skills is due to make an announcement following a Welsh Government consultation on the restructuring of higher education in Wales. In recent weeks, UCU Wales has warned the Minister against any proposals to asset-strip the University of Wales (which is now merging with Trinity St David's and Swansea Metropolitan), and that, if needs be, he must use his legislative powers to ensure the formation of a new metropolitan university in South East Wales (a merger of Cardiff Metropolitan, Glamorgan and Newport universities). A statement is expected before Christmas recess.

10. Report of the UCU-LSIS-UNISON Annual Staff Governors' Conference, Thursday 24 November 2011

The annual *UCU-LSIS-UNISON FE Staff Governors Conference: New Government, New Institutions: Change and Development in College Structures and Governance* was held on Thursday 24 November. The theme of the event was the new structures and partnerships that are developing in FE colleges as a response to the Government's policies to give colleges new freedoms and flexibilities, and how these will impact on governance and accountability. Rob Wye, CEO of LSIS, gave an overview of these developments. David Hughes the NIACE Director spoke about a new NIACE, AoC and 157 Group report on colleges and their communities. There were three case studies, from Cornwall College, Hull College and Stockport College, of how colleges were responding in their governance and accountability arrangements. The power point presentations used by speakers at the conference will be made available on UCU's website at: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/festaffgovernors2011>.

Alternatively please contact Diana Hendry in the Policy Department at:

dhendry@ucu.org.uk.

11. Report of the HE Teacher Educators' Seminar, Wednesday 9 November 2011

This seminar was organised for the UCU Teacher Educators' (ITE) Network of HE-members educating school teachers.

The first speaker was Melissa Benn, recent author of 'School Wars: The Battle for Britain's Education' (Verso 2011), who spoke on state education versus state-funded education, outlined her campaign work against academies and with the Local Schools Network (<http://www.localschoolsnetwork.org.uk/>), bringing her analysis of 'state-funded' academies and free schools to bear on the DfE ITE proposals.

James Noble-Rogers, Chief Executive of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) outlined the DfE response to the predominantly critical responses to the Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove's June 2011 consultation on ITE, 'Training Our Next Generation of Outstanding Teachers'. Although the DfE response, published on the previous

day, had not amended nor ameliorated any of the original June proposals, James maintained UCET's original response, which was that the majority of successful ITE provision was built on successful partnerships between HEIs and schools, a steady state of successful provision underwritten by glowing OfSTED reports, which was equally a major element of UCET's written evidence to the current Education Select Committee Enquiry into ITE.

Professor Ken Jones, Head of Goldsmiths, University of London's Education Department, gave a critical and evaluative address on the history and impact of government policy on education research and research-informed teacher education.

A panel debate chaired by Simon Renton, UCU Vice-President HE, drew out discussion further and gave members the opportunity to contribute to UCU policy development and help shape the UCU campaign on teacher education, in particular the urgent need to both expand the UCU HE ITE Network and facilitate two-way communication between the Network and UCU.

To see the full seminar programme click here:

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/p/g/9-Nov-11_Teacher_Education_Seminar_Programme.pdf

12. Policy in Northern Ireland

Programme for Government 2011-15

The First and Deputy First Ministers launched the draft Programme for Government on Thursday 17 November – aimed at creating a strong and stable economy for the benefit of all.

In respect of Further and Higher Education, the PFG proposes:

- a capital grants scheme for investment in universities;
- upskill working age population by delivering 200,000 qualifications;
- no increase in student fees;
- support young people into employment through skills and training;
- establish Education and Skills Authority by 2013.

Foyle MLA Pat Ramsay said expansion at the Magee campus in Derry should be included as part of PFG plan for universities.

Education and Skills Authority

The long awaited Education and Skills Authority is being progressed, having been put on hold for almost two years. The ESA will subsume eight existing bodies:

- a) The Education and Library Boards;
- b) Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS);
- c) Staff Commission;
- d) Youth Council.

Joint campaign to protect EMA

UCU is joining forces with NUS-USI and other unions to campaign for the protection of EMA which is under review in Northern Ireland – expected to be published any day soon. EMA will then go out to consultation early in 2012. A No Day Motion on EMA was placed in the Assembly last month by Barry McElduff (SF), Michelle Gildernew (SF), and Phil Flanagan (SF).

If you have any comments or feedback on PolicyNews, please send to Diana Hendry at dhendry@ucu.org.uk.