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Next steps on FE England pay

UCU's further education Committee met on Friday 4 March to consider feedback on the joint strike action taken with UNISON on 24 February. The committee was also updated on the position of the other unions and the Association of Colleges following the 24 February strike action.

The committee was advised of the National Union of Teachers decision to call a one day strike on 15 March in their dispute against the Secretary of State for Education on funding for sixth form colleges. The legal and practical difficulties which prevented the option of taking joint action with the NUT on that day were reported to the committee.

In the light of feedback that only a minority of branches were in favour of taking further strike action in support of the 2015/16 claim, the committee adopted a recommendation that:

"UCU should take no further action in pursuit of the 2015/16 claim and instead initiate discussions with the other trade unions in order to draft an FE England pay and conditions claim for 2016/17 for submission as soon as possible."

Therefore UCU will seek discussions with the other FE trade unions over the composition of a pay and conditions claim for 2016/17 to be submitted before the end of April. There are some indications that the AoC may be

prepared to hold talks on a broader range of issues for 2016/17 than in previous years where their bargaining remit has been extremely restrictive.

Area reviews

FEC also considered a motion regarding the government's area reviews of post 16 education which was carried as amended and resolves to provide support to branches in opposition to mergers that detrimentally impact on terms and conditions and provision. Branches that are likely to go into dispute as a result of area reviews should contact their regional official so that, where possible, ballots and action can be coordinated with other branches also in dispute.

Initial UCU guidance for branches on the area reviews was issued in September 2015 and has since been updated in January 2016 to include the latest available information and details on which Regional Official is leading for each of the reviews in the first two waves. The latest guidance can be found at:

www.ucu.org.uk/post16areareview.

Also available:

- Briefing document for MPs and local politicians.
- Model letter to MPs on area reviews
- Information collection form

Progress on building effective bargaining (national plus Part 2 claims)

As previously reported in FE News, some branches have this year taken up the option to submit the national £1 extra per hour pay claim at a college level together with other claim elements that deal with issues that are important to members locally. We have already reported in FE News 62 on agreements in the following branches:

- City of Bath
- South Downs College
- West Suffolk College
- South Essex College
- Canterbury College

Below is an update on progress on these negotiations in a further four branches.

Lakes College

Lakes College UCU branch have successfully negotiated an agreement with management on pay and workloads. Management agreed to a 1% consolidated pay increase backdated to 1 August 1 2015 and to paying assessors the HPL rate when they are engaged in teaching. This led to a real rise in excess of 1% for assessors. The agreement also provides for a joint working group on workloads, with UCU and Unison representation which will allow members to bring workload concerns forward with management.

Oaklands College

Oaklands College branch negotiated an agreement at the end of last year that included a 1% increase in pay from 1 January 2015 (the anniversary date in this college), increased annual leave and improvements in terms of the employer's approach on workload and other issues.

Northbrook College

UCU Northbrook College branch successfully negotiated an agreement with their college management that provided for a consolidated increase across the board of 1%, the first that had been achieved in four years and increases in the maximum from point 31 to 32. The negotiations also introduced the prospect of increasing the scale to point 33 next year. Much progress was also made in setting up a workload allocation model which will be trialled. The negotiating meetings were very constructive and built upon the already amicable working relationship between the college and UCU.

Famous FE graduates

As a part of building UCU's future campaigning efforts we are collecting names of former FE students that have gone on to become famous and would be likely to be sympathetic to the plight of FE and prepared to put their name to future campaigns in support of FE funding and FE generally. If you have had or know of a former student from FE that fits this description please email mwaddup@ucu.org.uk with details.