



HIGHER EDUCATION

Our Ref MJR/VT/HE/09/06

10th May 2006

**To: All Univ Reps and Branches,
Regional Officers for information
Sue Sharp NEC for information
Dave Trafford NEC for information
Doug Collins AGS for information**

Dear Colleagues,

JNCHES 8th May 2006 Pay Negotiations

This is a report of matters that arose at the last JNCHES on Monday 8th May 2006.

I had already circulated the Employers side press report yesterday but with a clear rider that UCEA's view was not how PTAAS unions saw events and hopefully this report will give a little more clarity to the actual discussions.

The sessions at JNCHES are carefully choreographed as there are a lot of sensitivities about who gets an offer first or second etc. Personally I am not precious about these things as it is the amount of the offer that is most important not whether PTAAS or ASSC are made an offer first.

This is relative only because ASSC for some reason took umbrage at the first session when both PTAAS and ASSC were invited to the first session and UCEA made an opening offer to both groups at the same time. This appears to have upset academic sensitivities.

The offer included a lump sum or percentage increase. This was something PTAAS was interested in to uplift low pay areas.

Colleagues will be aware of developments at St Andrews that I advised in the last circular and also Aberdeen. Many interpretations were being placed on these moves but one effect was clearly to raise expectations for the JNCHES negotiations.

This meant the offer when it was received arrived with all the force of a damp squib.

The opening offer was

August 2006	3% or £430 whichever is greater
April 2007	0.75%
August 2007	3%
April 2008	£225
August 2008	3%

Plus London Weighting to have the same % average increase as the total figures.

UCEA also gave us their financial forecast that the offer would cost £1.6bn and with additional costs of superannuation and tax would total £2.3bn. Their view was that 90% of all new money (including student fees) was going out in staff costs.

There were some strings, the most difficult was that HEI's who had any financial difficulties in meeting the claim could defer the increase. For up to 11 months.

At the PTAAS side meeting I said I felt completely underwhelmed by the offer.

A series of shuttle diplomacy meetings followed the most significant of which was the ASSC side refusal to meet as a joint trade union body to hear a revised offer.

PTASS reluctantly went alone to the next meeting whilst ASSC twiddled thumbs for a while.

At the PTAAS side negotiations we expressed disappointment at the offer and also opened up our claim on a 35 hour week as well as trying to get UCEA to issue a statement about unequal practices (such as differential assimilation and separate application of the MoU) to their subscribers.

Eventually a further offer was made. May I just add, personally, I find the whole process of inching towards UCEA's final offer as a bit of negotiation theatre.

The final offer was then tabled with a condition that the offer would be put to our members. No such condition was accepted but PTAAS advised the various negotiating groups or executives would look at the offer in due course.

The final offer was in UCEA own words

<i>August 2006</i>	<i>greater of 3% or £515</i>
<i>February 2007</i>	<i>1%</i>
<i>August 2007</i>	<i>3%</i>
<i>February 2008</i>	<i>greater of 1% or £200</i>
<i>August 2008</i>	<i>3%</i>
<i>February 2009</i>	<i>1%</i>

Compared with pay rates in 2005-06, this implies pay increases by the second half of each academic year totalling at least:

<i>2006.7</i>	<i>4%</i>
<i>2007.8</i>	<i>8.2%</i>
<i>2008.9</i>	<i>12.6%</i>

with increases of up to 15% by the end of the period for the very lowest paid staff.

Because of the phasing, the overall cost of this offer to institutions would be a little lower, as follows:

<i>2006.7</i>	<i>3.6%</i>
<i>2007-08</i>	<i>7.7%</i>
<i>2008-09</i>	<i>12.0%</i>

PTAAS were advised the same offer was put to the ASSC side however there is some dispute about whether the academics were told that instead of the phasing they could have 4% for two years. Roger Kline of NATFHE on their website refers to it but UCEA deny this arrangement was ever put to them.

In any event UCEA claim the main offer not only scraped the barrel but includes the barrel as well.

PTAAS side negotiations then concentrated on the 35 hour and holiday issues and UCEA issued, in our view, a weak statement of intent, as well as an updated statement on further advice on equal pay reviews.

The meetings concluded at this point with PTAAS advising that its various component unions will consider what to do next. A draft PTAAS side statement was being worked on but so far no agreement on words. Unison may well post their own.

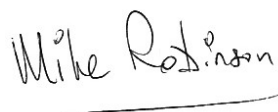
My view is that in any other year such figures would be looked at with far more interest. However with the student fees top up and developments around St Andrews/Aberdeen and the piecemeal approach to negotiations by UCEA this offer appears less interesting in the light of all that.

Colleagues will also be interested in other developments. I have spoken to our rep at St Andrews and it looks likely that academic and support staff will have the 5% +3.5% + 3.5% imposed. The main problem is the effect on local versus national negotiations and attempts to break up national bargaining. EIS in Scotland are now balloting for action short of a strike.

There may be another JNCHES but UCEA are saying no to this at the moment. Seasoned JNCHES watchers will know that the anniversary date is not until 1st August so there is still a lot of time for further manoeuvres. A full HENIC meeting will be called in due course but because of logistics and holidays that will not be possible to organise quickly. I will get a date out to delegates as soon as I can.

Finally I am constrained on many of the details of behind the scenes negotiations including an excellent put down by our colleague in the T&G. May I suggest colleagues keep in touch with our two other JNCHES negotiators Alan Howard at Kings College London and Dave Jones at Manchester before anyone launches tirades for or against the offer or on UCEA propaganda or even demands that HENIC meet tomorrow. There is a lot going on.

Yours sincerely



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