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EDUCATION SECTOR

Our Ref: MJR/VT/HE/42/11

14th December 2011

To: All Workplace Reps and Branches

Colleagues

New JNCHES 2011 Pay

This letter is to update members on where we are in relation to pay and the Unite industrial action.

Members should be aware that a ballot in favour of action short of strike, namely working to contract and an overtime ban, was carried with the result being announced on the 21 November. Seven days notice of action was sent to all Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) where Unite has members, with the action commencing on 30th November until further notice.

A number of HEI's have responded by issuing threats to members about possible deductions from pay, non payment of pension contributions or withdrawal of death in service benefits and other possible sanctions. If you are threatened in this way or are actually deducted pay please let your local Unite Regional Officer know and they will advise the best way to respond.

I think it worth pointing out that at the Unite Education Conference last month Jocelyn Prudence, Chief Executive of UCEA, the employer association, admitted that if Unite members were working within the terms of their contracts then deductions from pay should not happen. This would also be the case when members refuse to carry out non contractual overtime.

Local Unite groups should decide whether to ban all overtime or only non contractual overtime or whether some overtime should be worked. Local groups are free to apply local sanctions within the terms of the "action short of strike". Non coverage of staff work who are off sick, on holiday or not replaced is another form of sanction that is being successfully applied in HEI's with effect. HR Managers and even Vice Chancellors or Principals have woken up to the fact Unite is in dispute.

My thanks to all members involved in taking action.

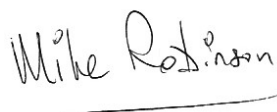
As for the next steps I am advised by GMB that they have reluctantly accepted the UCEA offer but do not want to see it implemented until all unions have settled their disputes with UCEA. This is the same position as UCU and EIS who have also agreed to accept the offer. Unison will announce shortly the result of their second consultation on the offer having rejected the offer in the summer.

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The Unite National Education Committee has agreed to approach UCEA for further talks under the dispute procedure. UCEA have asked that these talks are carried out with the assistance of ACAS. This is allowed under the terms of the dispute procedure. A meeting at ACAS between UCEA and Unite negotiators, Tony Britton from University of East London, Haydn Morris Chair of the Unite National Committee who works at Lancaster University and myself will be held on the 15th December. I will report the outcome of those talks or any subsequent discussions to the next National Committee which will meet on the 13th January 2012. I do not anticipate a further update to members until after the 13th January.

May I take this opportunity of thanking members for continuing to apply industrial action and to wish Unite members a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Yours in solidarity

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Robinson".

Mike Robinson
National Officer
Education