

Mike Robinson
National Officer
Unit 1 Kings Chambers
Hertford Place
Coventry
CV1 3JZ

Tel: 02476 227522
Fax: 02476 228036
Email: mike.robinson@unitetheunion.org



EDUCATION SECTOR

Our Ref: MJR/VT/20/12

23rd May 2012

**To: All Workplace Reps and Branches
Regional Officers responsible for Higher Education**

Colleagues

2012 Pay Claim negotiations.

The final session of New JNCHES negotiations with UCEA took place yesterday 22nd May. A copy of UCEA's full final offer is attached for your information.

Despite the fact that inflation over the period 2009 to 2012 has resulted in higher education staff on the 51 point spine losing over 10% of their pay in real terms, the Employers are still trying to limit pay increases to below inflation. Their final offer was to increase pay by 1%. For those on the bottom spine points that would be a miserly £138 per annum.

The joint union claim was for a 7% increase to match current RPI and some catch up for lost years.

As you will recall Unite still has not settled the 2011 pay negotiators when the Employers offered just 0.5% worth £65 to the lowest paid in the sector but the Employers have now imposed this deal on staff.

Your Unite negotiators rejected the offer yesterday as totally inadequate and especially as did not address catch up for 2011. At yesterday's meeting not one single union was prepared to accept the deal on offer and rejection of the offer by all unions looks certain. This would mean all unions are likely to fight for a better deal and commence membership consultation over the coming weeks.

The Unite National Education Industry Committee suspended industrial action on the 2011 claim in March for the period of the 2012 pay talks. Please note it is highly likely that the industrial action short of strike including work to rule and working to contract will be reapplied shortly. A meeting of the Unite national committee is being convened to consider next steps.

If, as expected, all unions reject the latest offer, then the disputes procedure on the 2012 claim will be engaged which involves two meetings under the disputes process to resolve any dispute.

There were other aspects in the UCEA offer including a half hearted attempt to persuade local HEI's to implement a "Living Wage" as a minimum standard of £7.20 per hour. There was a refusal by UCEA to include professorial pay into the national pay spine. UCEA preferred to "note" the unions concerns that professorial pay is often determined by non transparent means and in possible breach of equality provisions. It is draining pay resources into the top echelons rather

Contd/...2

than staff on the 51 point pay spine... It is worth noting that professorial pay increases have not been limited to 0.5% or 1% in recent years.

UCEA are willing to recommend uplift of the London Weighting for applicable institutions by 1%. Again this figure is woefully inadequate measured against real term pay erosion over recent years.

As with many UCEA responses to the joint union claim items UCEA usually seek to divert attention of a failure to make an offer by proposing to set up joint committees to look at these thorny problems but with no real outcome. This has been the case with the last joint Equality Committee report in 2011 that made 8 recommendations, none of which have been implemented. UCEA have again proposed to set up a committee to look at the last Equality Committee recommendations! so we now have the offer of a committee to look at what the last committee have done! It has become a complete farce.

A request for a national agreement on disability was met by UCEA with an attempt to divert the problem to an outside body called the Equality Challenge Unit to consider. UCEA are supposed to be able to negotiate agreements but on many occasions they can't negotiate themselves out of a paper bag.

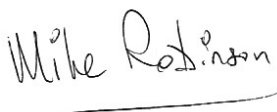
As part of Unite's industrial action last time we withdrew co-operation from these committees and we will reapply this sanction again in the light of the miserly 1% offer.

Unite's message to UCEA has been clear, the pay offer is completely inadequate and we won't sit down and pretend to do business with an Employers body like UCEA that is failing staff. Unite as the only union still fighting for substantial increases in both 2011 and 2012 will continue to press for a decent pay increase.

Please support your union. Attend any branch meetings called to discuss the 2012 offer and continue to support the work to contract action on the 2011 claim to put pressure locally. Further consultation on the 2012 offer will commence shortly once the national committee has heard the latest on negotiations and decides anything further that can be done, including a possible further ballot and escalation of industrial action.

Below are the headline UCEA offers for your information. I will be writing to you again once the Unite National Education has met to consider the next steps forward.

Yours sincerely



Mike Robinson
National Officer
Education

- **Pay:** Employers made a final offer of an increase of 1% on all points on the JNCHES pay spine.
- **London weighting:** Employers offered to make a recommendation of an uplift of 1%, in line with previous practice, to Post-92 HEIs which have retained separate London weighting.
- **Living Wage:** It is noted that the trade unions have raised the Living Wage campaign as an important part of their claim.

The lower rates on the 51 point pay spine in HE do compare well with many other sectors and many HEIs are already meeting (or exceeding) the levels used within the campaign.

Where an HEI is not in that position for staff they employ directly, we would expect the matter to be raised within the local negotiating arrangements.

- **Approaches to professorial and senior pay systems:** Employers note the trade unions have raised concerns over institutions' approaches to pay equality and pay systems for professors and other senior staff and that these matters are dealt with at institutional level. Employers endorse the principle of paying staff within equality proofed arrangements.
- **Joint work on equality items:** Employers offer joint work to explore the equality related issues raised in the trade unions' claim.
 - Reminding institutions of the recommendations of the 2009/10 Equality Working Group.
 - A survey to review the impact of the final report of the Equality Working Group and its recommendations on the conduct of equal pay reviews, including hourly paid employees.
 - Engaging with the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) to explore the approaches to disability leave in the sector.

Joint working already committed: The employers are already committed to joint work initiatives covering training and development and pay data.