

EDUCATION SECTOR

Our Ref: MJR/VT/HE/10/09

22nd May 2009

**To: All Workplace Reps and Branches
Sue Sharp NEC for information
Paul Bartle NEC for information**

Dear Colleagues

HE Pay meeting outcome JNCHES 19th May 2009

The latest pay, terms and conditions meeting for 2009 was held at the joint negotiating committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) 19th May.

At this we were issued with two pieces of paper that are summarised below.

The University and Colleges Employers Association have sought to argue that any increase in pay is seen in the context of these items:

- HE Pay has improved considerably under the previous 2006 - 2009 pay deal
- RPI is now running at 1.2% and any figure that is positive is a real term increase in pay
- Employers are facing substantial cost pressures from Pensions provision especially the rates rise for USS at 2%
- 2009 Budget which called for savings of £180 m from Hefce in 2010/2011
- HEI sustainability and job security where a simple survey of universities reveal 67% indicated they were currently implementing or considering staff reductions

On Pensions we noted some Higher Education Institutions are cutting rates in many of the self administered trusts to which large parts of Unite members belong and using one group of staff as an example to cut the pay of other was not sustainable.

The budget issue was expanded as we felt that the figures quoted were spread over several years and the impact of cuts in this round would be £65 m and that despite these cuts the Further education sector could make an offer to their staff of 1%.

The Employers then announced that their offer on pay was increased to 0.4%. To put that in to proper perspective anyone on a salary of £20,000 would get an extra £80. It goes without saying that the trade union side rejected such a derisory offer out of hand.

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The trade union side continue to argue that if substantial job losses were likely then the TU side was seeking a national agreement on job security and redundancy avoidance. The Employers side continue to argue they had no remit from UK University and Colleges to broker such an agreement but clearly they were willing to issue statements or letters to that effect.

The trade union side have agreed to consider what should be in such an agreement and have agreed a draft. The Employers seem reluctant to reach agreement on ways to minimise job loss or follow processes that could avoid them and a heated exchange between negotiators ensued.

The union side felt extremely angry that the meeting was seemingly negotiating by pieces of paper. We felt that in the new improved scheme this was an inefficient and wasteful means of negotiating. We asked for a side meeting of the officers and chair (incidentally Dave Jones chaired this meeting on behalf of the union side)

A further meeting is expected but hopes are not high about the prospects for that meeting

As some of you are aware UCU are now no longer balloting because of the absence of a proper offer before yesterday. Some minor progress was made on other items looking at equality pay audits, pay gap or statutory issues such as adoptive, maternity or parental leave.

On London Weighting there was no progress for pre 92 Universities although post 92's in London could expect an uplift of 0.4% in their rates if the Employers offer on pay was applied to London Weighting. This may well amount to £0.90 per month before stoppages.

Yours sincerely

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

Mike Robinson
National Officer
Higher Education