

Higher Education Consultative Ballot



VOTE NO TO A PAY CUT AND YES FOR ACTION

Another pay cut!

The austerity measures and pay freeze have brought a fall in real pay (for ordinary people) for the first time since the Second World War. This year workers in Higher Education have received yet another derisory 'full and final' offer of 1 per cent. In real terms this is another cut in pay. Most of us have had a pay 'increase' over the last three settlements of about 1.4 per cent.

During the same period the RPI has increased by over 12 per cent! This means a real pay cut of over 10 per cent in the value of take home pay for staff! This has wiped out the gains we made between 2006 and 2008. Add the hike in pension contributions and pay has fallen even further.

To add injury to insult, once again the employers are refusing to negotiate at a national level on a range of issues in respect of UCU equality policy, relating to hourly paid staff for example, unless we accept the real-terms pay cut. Lower paid staff, those on fixed term contracts and hourly paid are particularly vulnerable with large portions of their income swallowed up by rent, travel and other necessities.

The consultative ballot

HE Sector Conference this year voted overwhelmingly that any derisory offer should be rejected and to move to a ballot so that we can take action in the Autumn Term.

A consultative ballot is now being conducted 'to gauge support' before moving to a statutory ballot for industrial action. We need to ensure that we get a high turnout and a good YES vote for BOTH strike action and ASOS (action short of a strike).

UNISON has already got the results of their consultation, and the results were good – a 60 per cent rejection. They are now moving to an industrial action ballot in the new term. To break the pay freeze we need to go out together.

Defending pay and defending education

The fight for pay is not just a narrow sectional issue. Defending our living standards against pay cuts is linked to the broader fight to defend education. A good vote in the consultative ballot and in the subsequent industrial action statutory ballot sends a message to our employers that we are serious about defending

education, as well as our pay.

Some VCs would like to introduce performance related pay and end incremental progression, as announced by Osborne for government and local government workers. The situation at the University of Liverpool where all 2,803 academic related staff are under threat of being dismissed in order to be rehired on inferior contracts, is an example of the attacks that workers in Higher Education are facing.

Not fighting over pay allows our employers to undermine national pay and engage in a divide and rule internally through bonus schemes, performance related pay and the introduction of new pay scales. We need to reassert the basic interests of staff over our employers. A fight over pay would strengthen our ability to organise against other attacks in HE.

Building a campaign

Vote NO to the offer and YES to industrial action – both strike action and ASOS. Contact your branch officers and get them to circulate this leaflet to the branch. We need a big campaign – a national meeting and materials - to build support for statutory ballot.

Join online at www.uculeft.org / Twitter: @uculeft