

1% NO WAY: VOTE TO REJECT THE PAY OFFER

Organise for action in the autumn

UCU members are being asked in an electronic consultative ballot to reject the employers' pay offer. UCU Congress rightly decided to recommend a rejection in the ballot.

All we are asking for is action to redress the long-term decline in real pay, action to redress the gender pay gap and action to redress the scandal of zero-hour contracts and casualization.

Yet the employers through their negotiating body UCEA thought this all too much.

Instead they proposed a further real terms pay cut with a pitiful 1 percent rise, an introduction of the Living Wage and a 1 percent increase in London weighting in post-92 Universities. These go nowhere near what is needed to address the rising costs of living.

Collective action

The election of the Tory government on just 37 percent of the vote (24 percent of the electorate) means only our collective action can be relied upon to defend our pay, jobs and students' education.

The Tory government is intent on driving austerity still further into society and in education this means the market and privatisation will be pursued more vigorously.

Our opportunity to stop these attacks starts now with a rejection of the latest pay cut from our employers.

The media has been talking up the fact that headline inflation is around zero. But 1% does not even begin to catch up with our 15% pay cut since 2008.



The average salary for a vice-chancellor reached £260,290 last year

For many members, facing regular increases of housing and travel costs in excess of inflation, this argument rings hollow.

Whose inflation?

The last five settlements have amounted to a pay increase of approximately 4.8 percent while inflation (measured by RPI up to July 2015) was 19.8 percent.

Over the same period electricity prices have jumped by up to 39 percent, gas by 45 percent and transport by over 19 percent.

Housing costs in many areas have gone up even faster, hitting members (eg. on fixed term contracts) forced to rent.

These averages hide still worse pay inequalities. The gender pay gap is a disgrace.

Forty years after the Equal Pay Act female academic staff, including professors, are paid on average 12.6 percent less, a difference of £6,042 per year.

Similar and worse differences exist over race and for other equality groups. As the UCU negotiators state. "The lack of a meaningful response to the pay equality claim is very disappointing and again reflects poorly on UCEA's commitment at

a national level to address a range of significant equality issues in the sector."

Of course top management in universities have done quite well for themselves.

UCU research shows that in 2013/14, the average vice-chancellor salary was £260,290, that is 6.4 times more than the average salary.

Twenty institutions had more than 100 members of staff earning £100,000 or over pa. This has roughly doubled in the last couple of years. There are now 5,541 staff paid £100,000 or over compared to 2,761 in 2011/12.

A strategy to win

The union needs a strong vote to reject the pay offer. But it also needs to mobilise members with campaign material arguing for a strategy to win.

We need a publicity campaign to maximise the vote against the offer in the consultative ballot and to continue the campaign into the autumn when a full ballot would be needed.

Only collective industrial (and other) action can successfully defend our pay, jobs, research and students' education.

In addition to improving our pay successful industrial action will contribute to halting the austerity agenda of further marketisation and privatisation.

National demonstration

End austerity now

Saturday 20 June, noon

London: assemble outside the Bank of England

Glasgow: assemble George Square

Called by the People's Assembly

www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk