

Tough Pay Talks

Jobs or pay? That is the tricky question being put to us in the current national pay negotiations. The employers argued that in a recession, with low inflation, high pension costs and the government announcing heavy cuts in funding, that any significant pay increase would have implications for HE institutions and would increase redundancies.

We have countered by noting that only some measures of inflation are low and that everyday costs on food, power and transport are still hitting members' pockets. We also don't totally accept the picture of financial meltdown that the employers paint, as government funding is still comparatively solid, surpluses have been increasing and the newly proposed government cuts in England while substantial, are half of the figure originally quoted by the employer. UNISON has also been open to negotiations around pension schemes with a view to ensuring the best outcome for members and employers. Unfortunately we have faced poor employers such as the University of Sussex who drove through their cuts when other cost-effective options were available.

We are not greedy. We recognise that we have had decent pay awards recently but this has been a period of catch-up from the time not too long ago when HE was the poorest payer in the public services. We are



calling for a fair pay increase that recognises increased student numbers, heavier workload and tight staffing levels. The pay offer from the employers just doesn't reflect this.

We were further disappointed that having raised the issue of redundancies the employers got nervous when we proposed joint national work on the issue. The national joint unions have submitted a national agreement on redundancy avoidance, seeking to give practical steps on how employers can work with unions locally to avoid redundancies or lessen their impact if they are inevitable. We are not sitting back and recent protests at redundancies at Bath University and London Metropolitan (<http://savelondonmetuni.blogspot.com>) have shown that members are prepared to stand up against unfair compulsory redundancies. See the links and the article from Bath University, page 3.

We will soon get to the end of negotiations. At this point we will consult with branches on the offer and ask the question whether the final package is enough, and if not what members are prepared to do about it. It will be your choice, so get involved. To download the pay campaign pack go to this link <http://www.unison.org.uk/education/higher/index.asp>



Framework Update in Wales

The framework has now been implemented in all HE institutions in Wales, the vast majority being agreed by UNISON after a full member ballot. It is an important step towards ensuring equal pay for our members. After all the hard work by our activists, we will be following up with equal pay audits and considering harmonisation issues that were 'parked'.

Some universities have met with activists and raised the difficulties with funding. At the same time there are further mergers being progressed with Trinity College Carmarthen and Lampeter University likely to become a new institution in the next 12 months. The UNISON HE service group will be meeting shortly to discuss how best to deal with all these difficult issues.

Birmingham University signs learning partnership agreement

The signing of a learning agreement and skills pledge in partnership with Birmingham University Hospitality and Accommodation Services (HAS) and the unions UNISON and Unite is groundbreaking in the higher education sector. It will open the door to learning and skills for people who may not previously have accessed learning opportunities.

The agreement will give non-academic, support staff an opportunity to move on to further and higher education, and its importance is even more significant in the current economic climate. It signifies that learning and the development of skills should be open to all staff, regardless of their previous achievements, academic or otherwise.

The learning agreement highlights the importance of the role of union learning representatives (ULRs) their advice and guidance to prospective learners, and how they can best work with the university to create a supportive network for the acquisition of skills and learning for all.

The ULRs Marian Jordan (UNISON) and Niki Constantinou (Unite) drove this initiative with the support of regional learning organisers Gurdeep Singh (UNISON) and Ian Bayford (Unite) working as a team with HAS manager



Birmingham University activists sign ground-breaking learning partnership agreement

Sue Simpson to negotiate the best agreement for the union members. It is hoped that this will provide added motivation and impetus to trade union colleagues in other universities and colleges to use the learning agenda as a core organising, recruitment and bargaining tool.

Matt Raine, UNISON branch secretary commented: "As a branch we are proud to be part of this initiative, as supporting skills and training of staff is at the heart of what we do."

Sue McLaren, acting director of HAS added, "HAS are delighted to sign this agreement, which is a culmination of a considerable amount of hard work between our union colleagues and HAS. We look forward to continuing our learning and development journey with the support of our union colleagues".

Northumbria University signs skills pledge

On 5 May 2009, following a campaign by the local UNISON branch, professor Andrew Wathey, vice-chancellor of Northumbria University, signed the Skills Pledge. Explaining that the Skills Pledge is a voluntary public commitment that encourages employers to support their staff to work towards and gain relevant and valuable qualifications he acknowledged that all staff contribute to the student experience and emphasised the importance of having skilled and competent staff to help fulfil our ambitions and support our success. Jane Embley, director of HR at Northumbria University stated that the university will actively encourage and support employees to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills and work towards level 2 qualifications. Eileen Thompson, UNISON branch secretary at Northumbria congratulated the university on signing the Skills Pledge and added that the commitment to raise employees' skills and competencies is an effective step forward and will be advantageous to the university and its staff.



Take part in our bullying survey

Bullying at work can lead to stress and ill-health.

UNISON believes that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect at work.

Workplace bullying and harassment prevents this happening and should not be tolerated.

To help us identify the extent of the problem UNISON has commissioned Portsmouth University to carry out an online survey of UNISON members asking for your experiences of workplace bullying and harassment.

Bullying leads to ill-health, work-related stress and can be the cause of untold misery to workers. This is not just bad for the workforce but is also bad management.

To take part in the online survey please visit: www.pbs.port.ac.uk/Survey/index.php?sid=43442&lang=en

UNISON united with other campus unions to fight job cuts at Bath

For the first time in the University of Bath's 40-year history, UNISON, Unite and UCU have combined to protest and undertake industrial action against compulsory, non-enhanced redundancies.

The university is alone in the south west in not calling for voluntary, enhanced redundancies. Last month, the university announced cost-saving measures in order to save up to £3 million, including plans to close its tennis scholarship scheme and axe a swimming scheme for teenagers.

UNISON members are angered by the campus cuts as they say the university has targeted lower-paid workers and that no option was given for voluntary redundancy. The cuts will also mean some vacancies will go unfilled and fixed-term contracts will not be extended. All unions were behind the protests against the cuts, which will affect support services departments, for example cleaners, technicians and clerical staff. Academic departments come next.



On 5 May 2009, around 150 people turned up to demonstrate their dissatisfaction at the start of a meeting of the academic assembly. Vice chancellor professor Glynis Breakwell, (pictured left) highest paid VC in the south west on a salary of £263,000, had to walk past protesters to get to the meeting.

Giles Peters (pictured below right), who has worked at the university as a room booking officer for 28 years, described the way he had been treated as

“absolutely brutal”; he said the first he had heard about the cuts was in a letter from the university and voiced his disgust after he was offered little more than £9,000 for nearly 30 years of service and could have been offered voluntary redundancy or even early retirement.

Chair of the campus UNISON branch Angela Harrington, (pictured below), was pleased with the turn-out as it was the first time that all the campus unions had protested against the university where a campaign was not part of a national campaign.



People and Planet

This year the UNISON higher education conference agreed to develop links and promote the work of People and Planet, which is the largest student network in Britain campaigning to end world poverty, defend human rights and protect the environment. There are 130 People and Planet groups in universities and colleges, striving to make a difference to their places of study and further afield.

Each year in February they run a Go Green campaign, which aims to ensure that climate change is taken seriously throughout the education sector. As a result, Oxford University got over 1,000 students and staff to sign a petition calling on senior managers to take action to make the university Go Green. The university appointed an environmental manager to drive forward sustainability, as well as saving the university money by reducing energy bills.



They have also created a green league table of universities, which has been instrumental in fostering competition between universities and helping demonstrate to senior management the value of improved environmental performance. In the last year environmental managers have been appointed for the first time in 17 universities, a 25 per cent increase overall. This year's green league will be published on 18 June in the Times Higher Education Supplement. For more information on People and Planet visit: peopleandplanet.org

Fight to end poverty pay in Bloomsbury

Following our Living Wage victory at Birkbeck last March, and a similar success at SOAS last year, UNISON and other activists from all the Bloomsbury colleges are teaming up to bring all local colleges on board to improve pay and conditions for contract staff. Over 100 activists held a march and rally on May Day to demand that the Bloomsbury colleges pay at least the GLA London Living Wage to all staff, whether directly employed or working for a contractor.

As a result of the Birkbeck victory, approximately 85 contract cleaning and catering staff working for Ocean and Sodexo will now be paid £7.45 per hour, a 35 percent increase from the national minimum wage of £5.73.

The UNISON branch, together with other campus unions, students and academic staff, petitioned, held rallies, public meetings, and protests and obtained statements from high-profile



supporters such as Ken Loach. There was also a high media profile. The college was eventually unable to ignore the mounting public pressure, which was combined with negotiation, the weight of staff and student opinion, and research demonstrating the potential benefits to the college of such a policy.

UNISON believes that in-house services are the best way of delivering public services, and that all staff working in higher education, whether directly employed or working for a contractor, should be paid in accordance with the national framework agreement.

UNISON members have found that using the UNISON commissioned research on why there should be a living wage as a minimum standard is an effective means to re-open discussions with college managements about improving working conditions for contracted staff and moving back towards in-house services.

As a result of our joint campaign, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has now also agreed to pay its contract staff the London Living Wage.

DIARY DATE
22-24
October
2009

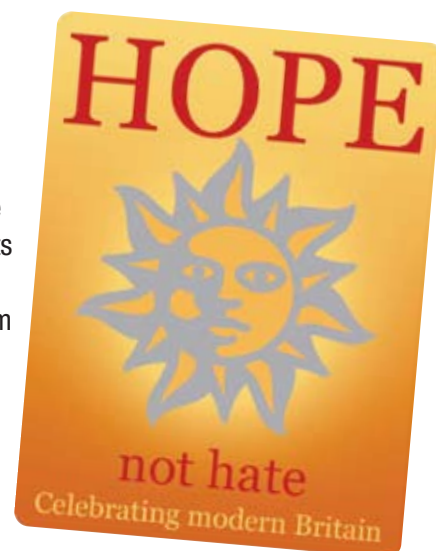
The next higher education branch seminar will be held in Edinburgh in a hotel near to the city centre on 22-24 October 2009. The event will comprise workshops and speakers on issues and challenges facing support staff in the sector. To find out more visit:
www.unison.org.uk/education/higher/index.asp

Email: education@unison.co.uk

Hope not hate

The HOPE not hate campaign was set up to counter racism and fascism in elections and beyond. To find out how you can link up to Hope not hate activities visit: http://action.hopenothate.org.uk/page/event/search_simple

We would encourage all UNISON branches to link up to this organisation. At Leeds Metropolitan University the UNISON branch linked up with the National Union of Students and Hope not hate to run a Love Music Hate Racism event at the university. To contact Hope not hate go to:
www.hopenothate.org.uk



Join UNISON — your friend at work

PLEASE FILL IN THIS FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS USING BLACK INK AND GIVE IT TO YOUR UNISON REP OR SEND TO THE ADDRESS BELOW
UNISON, FREEPOST WC5652, LONDON WC1H 9B

Please tick or fill in the boxes below

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Mrs Ms Miss Mr Other

First name Other initials)

Surname/Family name Date of birth /

Home address

Postcode

National insurance number (from your payslip)

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Bangladeshi Asian Other Black UK
 Chinese Black Black Other
 Indian African White UK
 Pakistani Black White
 Asian UK Caribbean Irish White Other

Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (eg large print or Braille) – be sure to supply contact details below

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you – indicate if work or home

Contact tel/voice/text/email

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Department/section

Workplace name and address

Postcode Payroll number (from your payslip)

3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY – FROM 1 October 2003

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

Weekly pay	Annual pay	YOUR SUBSCRIPTION—WHAT YOU PAY	
		per week	per month
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30
£38.48–£96.16	£2,001–£5,000	£0.81	£3.50
£96.17–£153.84	£5,001–£8,000	£1.22	£5.30
£153.85–£211.53	£8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60
£211.54–£269.23	£11,001–£14,000	£1.81	£7.85
£269.24–£326.92	£14,001–£17,000	£2.24	£9.70
£326.93–£384.61	£17,001–£20,000	£2.65	£11.50
£384.62–£480.76	£20,001–£25,000	£3.23	£14.00
£480.77–£576.92	£25,001–£30,000	£3.98	£17.25
£576.93–£673.08	£30,001–£35,000	£4.68	£20.30
£673.08+	over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid

Weekly
 Fortnightly
 Four Weekly
 Monthly

Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or Modern Apprentices).
 Your subscription is £10 per year.

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON's Affiliated Political Fund (APF) is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON's General Political Fund (GPF) is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below.

Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide information to UNISON to keep my records up to date
- I authorise deduction of the following Political Fund payment as part of my subscription: Tick one box only
 Affiliated Political Fund General Political Fund

Now please sign and date below

Signature
 Date

OTHER WAYS TO PAY

direct debit cheque
 (please tick if appropriate)

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one:

DATA PROTECTION

UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes.

We may also send you newsletters, journals and surveys and let you know about educational and campaigning matters. We will disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes.

If you do not want any mailings from UNISON besides those required by statute as shown in bold above, please tick this box.

We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship for your benefit. We, or they, may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

If you do not wish to receive such information please tick this box.

DIGNITY
everyone
JUSTICE
is entitled to
RESPECT
fair
DIVERSITY
treatment
FAIRNESS
at
EQUALITY
work
STRENGTH

Challenge racism with UNISON



Racism in the workplace can destroy education, careers and people's lives. Research conducted by the government has found that even when factors such as education and class are accounted for, there is no other explanation for racial inequality at work apart from discrimination.

The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) has set up a race forum to act as a focus for dialogue and action on race equality, the aims are to provide overall vision and strategic direction to a project examining issues affecting black and minority ethnic (BME) staff working in higher education. UNISON has lay representatives on this forum and we will be sending out advice on developments via bulletins.

UNISON has also developed a training package Challenging Racism in the Workplace, which is now being rolled out to all regions. To find out how your branch can be involved speak to your regional officer or contact Pav Akhtar, national race equality officer and CRW project manager by email: p.akhtar@unison.co.uk



The law gives you the tools...
UNISON gives you the skills.



Help available for effective communications

During the current pay campaign effective communication is a vital tool. In response to many branches' requests for information to improve their newsletters we have produced a number of useful resources that can be downloaded from our website: www.unison.org.uk/education/higher/index.asp