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FE England Strike Ballot

Colleges asked to pay £1 extra per hour or be in dispute

As we told you in FE News 59, UCU's Further Education Committee (FEC) has decided to arrange a strike ballot in response to the Association of Colleges' (AoC) decision to recommend that all its member colleges in England freeze staff pay in 2015/16. During the summer, UCU has written to colleges who are covered by the AoC national pay talks asking them to confirm that they will meet our claim of an increase in pay of £1 extra per working hour for all staff. These colleges have been given until noon 11 September to confirm that they will meet our claim. A trade dispute will then exist between UCU and any colleges who fail to confirm that they will meet the claim.

Branches which have submitted the national pay claim locally with additional claim elements can also participate with coordinated ballots and action. These branches will need to hold branch meetings before 11 September to consider the progress of the negotiations with their particular employer and decide whether to join coordinated ballots and action. Regional officials will contact these branches to confirm arrangements.

After 11 September we will again write to those colleges who have not met our pay claim and provide them with the required statutory notice of our intention to conduct a ballot for strike action with our members opening before the end of September. Further information on the ballot will be provided in due course.

Your pay is under attack

The AoC's recommended pay freeze is unprecedented. Your take home pay has been falling in value for the last six years, meaning less money in real terms for you and your family. A pay freeze will only make this worse. Since August 2009, when compared to inflation, the combined pay recommendations equal less than 3% in total and mean FE staff have suffered a pay cut of over 17%. For a lecturer at point 8 of the scale this is a cut in pay of over £6,100 per year.

Falling pay for FE Staff is a threat to the quality learning experience colleges can offer. Without the ability to retain and motivate experienced and committed staff, colleges will find it harder to deliver education to our communities. We cannot allow colleges to continue to attack the pay and conditions of FE staff. After six years of cuts to your pay, attacks on jobs and terms and conditions, a pay freeze is the last straw.

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The Membership Team are continuing to actively update the union's membership records. This necessary process will ensure the data we hold is as accurate as possible and will also enable members who are eligible to vote to take part in the pay ballot. To assist this process, please access your membership record online at: <https://members.ucu.org.uk/> and check your workplace and contact details are correct. To register for first use, you will need your membership number and email address we hold for you. Requests for lost membership numbers can be made at: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/nonumber>