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Jenny Smith.

North Staffs Trades Union Council delegates

Phil Burton-Cartledge, Steve Funnell, Jenny Smith

Auditor

Richard Wallace

Retirement of UCU Officer

David Sherwood retired from Keele University I.T. Services in March 2010. He joined the Computer Centre in 1976 as an Information Officer.

Dave has been a key Executive Officer for University and College Union, Keele Local Association, in particular a personal case worker and the lead campaigner with management over car parking issues since fees were introduced in 2001. He was also AUT/UCU Treasurer for many years.

K-UCU wishes him all the very best on his retirement and thanks him for all his support during his 33 years of service at Keele.

Useful Links

Computer Purchase Scheme, still available see

http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/fi/management/kle_only/5050_Proforma.pdf

National UCU Website

www.ucu.org.uk

Cycle to work Scheme

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/cycling/cycletoworkguidance/>

Keele UCU to launch new web site, link to follow soon

Update.....

We have had quite a few enquiries, recently regarding the Bicycle Purchase Scheme, which gives tax breaks to employees buying bicycles and cycling accessories for commuting to and from work. Discussion with management are on going as part of the Travel and Transport at Keele. Further details at

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/development/vision.htm>

~ Annual General Meeting Edition ~

Car Parking & University Travel Plan

Despite K-UCU opposition to the rise in car parking fees, Management has taken the decision to proceed with the fee rise, stating 'We recognise that there was not an agreed position on this occasion... We would reassure you that we have very much taken account of the views expressed by the trades unions as part of this consultation process' and that 'We believe that the new rate is reasonable and that the charging mechanism is fair and proportionate.' The rationale for the rise remains unclear, however, and the use of the funds garnered is still to be decided. The UCU will be actively involved in negotiations over the use of the funds, and we rely on communication and support from membership to secure the best outcome.

In recent meetings, the University has been vague about expressing the motivations for the fee rise, simply referring to a consultancy document suggesting a price rise but remaining unclear about the precise motivation for the consultation in the first place. We have been advised that the increased fees are meant to function as a 'negative incentive' to encourage reduced car usage and increased use of alternative forms of transport to and from campus, although effective forms of alternative transport are not yet in place. However, we have assurances that the extra revenue will be used to support the implementation of the University's five year transport plan. As such, the extra revenue generated by the price rises will be ring fenced for car parking and transport related expenditure, such as improved car parks signage, improved footpaths and cycle facilities and better public transport to and from the campus.

The K-UCU have requested an open staff information session on Travel Plans from the University, and at the time of going to print we await their reply. We will continue to negotiate with the University over how revenue obtained from car parking fees is spent on behalf of members, and advise members to purchase the permits as normal to avoid fines. Members are reminded that it is possible to surrender parking permits and re-start them, paying only for the months for which the permit is in possession. This can be done at Chancellor's Reception, but members are advised to check the payroll deduction cycle to ensure maximum usage.

Members are encouraged to continue to voice their concerns and suggestions regarding parking and transport-related issues to Mark Featherstone at: m.a.featherstone@appsoc.keele.ac.uk and Robin Bell at: r.bell@ciel.keele.ac.uk

National Pay Negotiations

No progress in talks

Following the New JNCHES meeting on Monday 19 April, the higher education unions - the University and College Union (UCU), EIS, GMB, UNISON and Unite - issued the following joint statement:

"At the new JNCHES meeting held on Monday 19 April, UCEA failed to improve on their previous offer of a sum equivalent to 0.25% (non-consolidated).

They also failed to respond to other aspects of the trade unions' claim, including the need for proposals to improve job security in the sector. They did, however, indicate a willingness to discuss issues associated with training and development further. UCEA negotiators agreed to refer the current position back to their board meeting on 29 April. The parties agreed to meet again on 5 May. The trade union side hope that the employers will come to the table with a credible offer." At a time when thousands of jobs are at risk in the sector, the UCU negotiating team considers it unacceptable for the Universities, Colleges and Employers Association (UCEA) to refuse negotiations on a national approach to job security.

The employers' refusal to improve on the pay offer of 0.25% (non-consolidated) is a real terms pay cut on the back of a real terms pay cut last year.

UCU head of higher education, Michael MacNeil, said: "There is nothing to prevent UCEA negotiating a national agreement to prevent job losses. In fact in these exceptional financial circumstances we think it is absolutely essential. They have failed to understand, or deal with, the full scale of the jobs crisis in the sector. To add insult to injury UCEA are also offering staff a real terms pay cut, this following a derisory payment last year. It is essential that the employers come back with a credible offer to avoid a dispute and worsening of industrial relations."

Have your say on the

~ 5th May ~

CBA 0.001 12 noon - 2 pm

- Do you care about Higher Education and your future at Keele?
- Would you like to join UCU but do not know how to?
- Are you a member and simply want to have your voice heard?
- Come along and find out what UCU is all about and the benefits of membership
- Share ideas about how your union can support you and how you can get more involved
- Collect UCU materials on important issues such as employment contracts, health and safety at work, and legal services, plus members' events

Non members welcome

Annual General Meeting

Friday 28 May 2010 1-2 pm,

CBA0.060

Guest Speakers:

Terry McKnight - UCU National Executive Committee

Barry Johnson - UCU Regional Official

Both will be talking about pay, pensions and finances.

Please email c.merritt@keele.ac.uk with items for the agenda, and also with nominations for the Committee or Executive Officers, by Monday 10 May 2010

EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK

Education is under attack. £190m is already being cut from the FE and adult education budgets, with more than £1bn cut from HE spending over the next three years. So far more than 20,000 UCU members' jobs are threatened by these cuts, and the politicians are promising 'more pain' after the election too. UCU believes that making these cuts at any time is an act of educational vandalism, but when there are 200,000 qualified students turned away by universities, one million 16-25 year olds unemployed, where people over the age of 50 are more likely to be long term unemployed, and when there are 7 million adults in Britain today who are illiterate and 14 million who are innumerate, it is a national scandal.

THE MONEY IS THERE Everyone knows that government has its priorities wrong in making swingeing cuts to education which can only hurt students and staff but the employers are playing the same game too. There are millions of pounds in college and university reserves which should be used to protect jobs and students. This leaves a responsibility upon UCU to lead the campaign to defend jobs and defend education. That is why our members at universities and colleges around the country are on strike on 5 May to protest about compulsory redundancies in their institutions. Whether your college or university is directly affected by the cuts yet or not, please play your part in helping the union to make the case for education. If an employer resorts to compulsory redundancy then the conditions of service for those who remain in work will soon be under attack. Bigger class sizes mean greater workloads leading to more stress-related illnesses. What is worse is that if one employer is able to cut jobs without a fight, it emboldens others to do likewise.

UNITY IS STRENGTH. UCU urges you support local activity on 5 May to send a clear message that we will not tolerate these cuts and we are going to fight them.

In the run up to the general election UCU will be making its case to all parties and to the public for defending education for all.

Let's send a clear message:

NO FUNDING CUTS
NO COMPULSORY REDUNDANCIES
DEFEND JOBS
DEFEND EDUCATION

Join the campaign. Join the union at www.ucu.org.uk/join

Negotiations over revising the USS scheme

In 2008 a working group of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) was established under Sir Andrew Cubie's chairmanship. Its task was, in Sir Andrew's words, to 'find ways to address the formidable funding challenges facing USS'.

Any changes to USS require UCU's approval and UCU is committed to balloting members about them. It shared the employers' view that changes were inevitable but by November 2009 the JNC had only agreed on the principles to be applied when changes were made. All parties were bound to respect confidentiality during the negotiations, but representatives of UCU branches were briefed about the sometimes robust exchanges of views on a number of issues.

The negotiations have now run their course. At the most recent briefing on 22 April it emerged that agreement between UCU and the employers about the way forward is unlikely.

UCU has undertaken to brief members in full following the JNC meeting on 30 April; this briefing is likely to come around 5 May. In any event, Terry McKnight, the chief UCU negotiator, will brief members at the AGM on 28 May. Given the importance of the subject we hope as many people as possible will attend. Meanwhile, please feel free to contact Joe Andrew and/or Lorna Lloyd with any questions about pensions.

Payflex+

In February the University informed the Unions about its intention to introduce a voluntary salary exchange (or salary sacrifice) scheme, *Payflex+*. Similar schemes have been introduced in other Universities.

At the national level UCU agreed to the USS rule changes that allowed USS contributions to be used in a salary sacrifice scheme, subject to agreement at local level on transparency in the allocation of benefits and safeguards for members who may be adversely affected. Accordingly, following consultations with Human Resources, Keele UCU decided not to oppose the introduction of Payflex+.

Management gave assurances that if the scheme is closed on no account will savings be 'clawed back' from employees.

The take up rate has been high, almost 100% (only 20 people so far have opted out). Anticipated savings of £314,009 will go into the general accounts. Participating staff will collectively save in the region of £170,796. Anyone who wants to review their participation will be able to do so on 1 April each year.

Further details about the scheme can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/payflex/>

Legislation, Policies & Procedures

Right to train

New employment legislation was introduced in April 2010, to give employees the right to request time off to undertake study or training. Human Resources are in the process of formulating a policy for Keele staff but if you require any information in the meantime check out.

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/Timeoffandholidays/DG_183635

Head of School or Research Institute Director

You are now able to self nominate if you wish to become the Head of School or Research Institute Director. Further details can be found <http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/uso/hr/policies-procedures/HOS-RID%20Appointments.htm>

New Policies and Procedures

Negotiations are taking place locally between your UCU officers and Keele University Human Resources on the following policies/procedures:- Staff Probationary Procedure, Fixed Term Working Policy and Procedure, Management of Staff Affected by Change Policy, Pay Protection Policy and Redeployment Procedure.

If you have been affected by any of these topics or would simply like to share your views - please contact

Sandra Gillham s.gillham@isc.keele.ac.uk and/or Tony Kearon a.t.kearon@crim.keele.ac.uk.

Survival Guide for new staff in FE & HE

UCU launched the first ever survival guide for staff entering further and higher education on Tuesday. The Early Careers Guide was published after a UCU survey of new staff found that many were not receiving the support and information they needed from employers. The guide provides useful tips on a range of issues, including how to find the right job and what staff should expect when they start work. It also gives advice on classroom management and what members should do if they have a problem at work.

For more information go to http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/d/4/ucu_earlycareersguide.pdf