

To: Secretaries of Higher Education Branches

HE/03/2013

3 June 2013

Dear Colleague

Higher Education National Pay Offer – Branch Consultation

I am writing to update you on the Employer's final offer relating to pay for 2013/14.

The third and final meeting of the JNCHES negotiations on the 2013/14 Higher Education pay round took place 21 May 2013. The employers have made a final offer of 1% on all pay spines, plus a commitment to further work on a number of other issues included within the trade union claim. Full details of the employer's offer are enclosed.

Clearly the offer does not meet the trade union claim in full and it represents a further below inflation pay rise in the sector. It also does not address the issues of the Living Wage for thousands of employees in the Higher Education Sector.

The Higher Education Service Group Executive (HESGE) met on 22 May and carefully considered the background of the offer as well as the current economic situation. The HESGE agreed to consult branches on the offer with a recommendation that Branches reject the offer. The HESGE felt it was unacceptable to have a fifth consecutive below inflation pay rise in higher education that further erodes the salaries of UNISON members.

Living standards of members are being squeezed at the same time as surpluses and cash flows in higher education are at record highs. We believe that the trade union side pay claim was both fair and affordable to institutions and deserved by our members.

According to the employers own statistics their final offer will still leave 4,000 higher education employees with incomes below the Living Wage.

The unions demonstrated in their claim that pay in the sector has fallen for most staff by over 13% in real terms over the last 5 years. We also demonstrated that higher increases are affordable.

Whilst the University sector is undergoing many changes and faces some challenges at the moment, we believe that it is not right for the employers to offer yet another year of minimal increases. Pay matters and is a concern to all staff in higher education.

If the current offer from the employers is rejected we will be looking to ballot members for industrial action, with a view to taking action in the autumn. The HESGE acknowledges

that the only means by which improvement in this offer can be achieved is through sustained industrial action by UNISON members, in conjunction with other higher education trade unions.

When consulting with members via workplace meetings or other methods Branches should ensure that they make members fully aware of the implications of rejecting the offer.

UCU at their conference resolved to consult members with a recommendation to reject the offer and invoke the New JNCHES dispute resolution process.

The other trade unions, GMB, Unite, EIS are meeting to consider their position.

Attached is a branch response form for the consultation. We will be producing further materials shortly to support branches in the pay campaign following a meeting of the SGE Pay Campaign Group on 6 June.

We would ask branches to engage as many of their members as possible in the consultation process to get a full picture of member's views. The response deadline is 5pm Monday 1 July 2013 and completed forms should be returned to:

Denise Bertuchi
UNISON
Education and Children's Services
130 Euston Road
London
NW1 2AY

Email: education@unison.co.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Richards". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jon Richards
National Secretary
Education and Children's Services

UNISON HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICE GROUP

INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON POSSIBLE INDUSTRIAL ACTION

BRANCH BALLOT FORM

BRANCH

INSTITUTION

Number of members in the branch

1. Are your members prepared to accept the Employers Final Offer of 1%?

Numbers prepared to ACCEPT the Employer Offer

Numbers prepared to REJECT the Employer Offer and are prepared to take substantial Industrial Action

Consultation method

(eg branch meeting(s), e-mail)

Secretary or Authorised Branch Officer

Signature

Telephone Number

E-mail

Date

Please return this form to:

**Denise Bertuchi
UNISON
1 Mabledon Place
London
WC1H 9AJ**

Fax 020 7551 1252

e-mail: education@unison.co.uk

By end of Monday 1st July