

### Pay Negotiations: the Whole Story

As you may be aware, the five main national unions (including UNISON) have been involved in HE pay negotiations and put together a claim that centred on the following:

- **A substantial rise: 5% or £1000 (whichever was greater)**
- **A commitment to the National Living Wage**
- **A greater commitment to closing the gender pay gap**
- **A commitment to reduce the casualisation of workers**

You will know that the employers' initial offer of 1% was rejected by our negotiators. The employers then came back with an insulting 'final' offer, increasing the amount by 0.1% to 1.1%; this did include some greater weighting on the lowest 7 points of the pay scale, the details of which have been circulated both by this branch and by the University in an all-staff email on 6<sup>th</sup> May.

#### Only Half the Story

This branch's view is that the University's email only told half the story. We would like to redress that balance.

**'Progression and contribution pay', which the employers keep insisting on including in their calculations and resultant publicity, are not part of these negotiations, they are reward for loyalty from staff and / or reward for exceptional pieces of work done by some of those staff. Progression / incremental pay reflect the growing experience and knowledge in each staff member as they continue dedicating their working time and energies to the University.**

Many staff are at the top of their pay grade, hence this argument is meaningless to them. **Contribution pay is not available to all; these payments have to be applied for and may therefore be denied.**

The University's communication fails to acknowledge that **staff will face higher National Insurance payments from April** (1.4% or £22 a month for those on £25,000 pa); **those in pension schemes (PAS or USS) have seen their contributions rise, while in PAS the University has cut its own contributions;** then there are the extra costs associated simply with getting to work such as the **rise in car parking charges** – something University has direct control over – and increasing public transport costs.

All of this needs to be seen against a backdrop of:

- 14-17% of lost pay against an increased cost of living since 2008;
- the ever-increasing wealth of the HE sector – HEFCE reports an increase in the operating surplus for the sector for 2015 of £1.6b, an increase of 3.9% on the previous year; **the University of Leeds' surplus increased from £39m to £42m in the last financial year;**
- the pay of senior managers within HE is decided by remuneration committees that allow no public oversight of the spending of public money but (in this university at least) is usually expressed as a 'percentage plus the nationally agreed award', so it is **always over and above what the standard employee receives** – calculated as a 3% rise in basic pay for 2015 following a Freedom of Information request made nationally by UNISON.



### OUR CALL TO MEMBERS

Taking all of this in the round, this branch asks you to seriously consider whether a 1.1% increase would be a satisfactory pay settlement. Our national body, the Service Executive Group, certainly doesn't think so and voted unanimously to reject the offer at their meeting on 10 May.

As a result of this, UNISON has written to the University and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) calling on them to begin the national dispute resolution procedure. This will be followed by a consultation of branches, with a recommendation that members reject the offer and move to an industrial action ballot.

Once we have more details we will arrange an open meeting for members. In the meantime if you have any questions on this, or any other subject, please call into the Branch Office or contact us at [unison@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:unison@leeds.ac.uk)

