

VICTORY!

Member power triumphs yet again!

Historic week in the West Midlands region as Sandwell College staff secure a bumper 6.25% pay rise over 3 years and Coventry University UCU win union recognition battle!



SANDWELL COLLEGE

UCU and Sandwell College have negotiated a sector-leading pay deal worth 6.25% over 3 years, increasing to 6.5% if further growth in student numbers is achieved.

The deal will apply to all employees and has been endorsed by the other recognised trade unions at the college, Unison and AMiE, who have also signed the collective agreement.

As part of the deal, the college will increase its minimum pay level to align with the Voluntary Foundation Living Wage recommendation.

As well as improving pay, the deal includes an agreement to establish a joint working group to review working practices, with a focus on improving staff wellbeing and reducing sickness absence.

This hard won victory was secured by our Sandwell UCU members taking 5 days' strike action, (picketing in sub-zero temperatures) A further 3 days' strike action was called off in light of the improved management offer.

COVENTRY UNIVERSITY

Trade union rights: UCU wins recognition at Coventry

An agreement was finally reached with Coventry University Group that UCU will be recognised to negotiate for staff. The agreement means that UCU will be recognised to negotiate on pay and other key terms and conditions for academic staff at CU Coventry, CU Scarborough and CU London. The parties have agreed [a joint statement which you can read in our press release here](#). A very big thank you to the thousands of members who have supported this campaign from the start, Members of Parliament, and last but not least, the Herculean efforts of the branch, regional office staff and national officers involved. It has been a long haul and an acrimonious campaign, with UCU battling dirty tricks from the university at every turn. The University registered their staff association as a sham union using a legal loophole to block UCU's successful campaign which resulted in CU Coventry staff signing sufficient pledges for union recognition. This is a victory for every trade union and every trade union member, which could have had ramifications across the movement if the employer had succeeded with their dirty tricks.



OTHER NEWS

FE FIGHTS BACK CAMPAIGN

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/FEfightsback>

UCU is launching a 'second wave' of our campaign for better pay and better jobs in FE and many branches are now preparing to take up issues like pay, workload and job security directly with your college management.

The Association of Colleges (AoC) has confirmed that [they are now refusing to negotiate with us](#) on pay while local disputes, aimed at improving pay and conditions continue.

UCU intends to submit a claim for 5% or £1500 (whichever is greater) to colleges not currently in dispute in England. Where there's no positive response we'll start balloting in June for strike action.

We'll only be able to take action if at least 50% of members vote so if you support our FE fights back campaign we'll need your help to spread the word when the ballot opens.

WEST MIDLANDS WOMEN'S GROUP GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

The West Midlands Women's Group held its second meeting on 17 May, ably chaired by new West Midlands Women's Officer Rhianon Lockley, and goes from strength to strength. The Group has agreed to link into other regional Women's Group's, as well as campaigns such as Save Birmingham Nurseries, Save Birmingham's Libraries and outsourcing of Student Welfare Provision at University of Wolverhampton.

Date of next meeting is 5 July 1800 hrs for 1830 hrs start. Calling notice will be sent out in due course.

UCU WORKLOAD CAMPAIGN PILOT

Coventry University and North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire Colleges are currently piloting a National UCU Workload Campaign, to be officially launched at Congress this month, initiated by conducting workload H&S inspections. This innovative workload campaign project uses the appointment of UCU 'Workload' Reps. UCU is the first trade union to develop the concept of a Workload Rep. The role is an amalgam of Health and Safety Rep and Workplace Rep. Workload Reps are essentially Health and Safety Reps with a sole focus on workload and work-related stress issues in their workplace department. Their appointment is underpinned by a set of regulations that give them a number of powerful statutory functions, including conducting workplace inspections, investigations and rights to consultation and information. The findings of these inspections will then be used as a tool to negotiate better terms and conditions for members with management. Look out for more details after Congress. In the meantime, if you have conducted a branch workload survey and are interested in taking part in the next phase of the project contact regional office or Adam Lincoln, UCU Bargaining and Negotiating Official, (Health, Safety and Sustainability) on alincolin@ucu.org.uk

IT'S YOUR TIME. LET'S GET IT BACK

WEST MIDLANDS ANTI-CASUALISATION WORKING GROUP

The third meeting of the group will take place on 25th May, 1330 hrs at Alpha Tower, with a view to putting on an Anti-Casualisation Roadshow in the summer term.

Watch this space for more details in the near future. If you are interested in taking part contact Lesley Foley on lfoley@ucu.org.uk