

The money is there We want our share!

Three more days of strike action in FE colleges starts this week

This week 10 colleges will start a second phase of strike action for a 6% pay award with additional local claims on fractionalisation and conditions.

The majority of those branches will be striking together for three days: from Tuesday 27th until Thursday 29th February.

UCU members in further education held two days of successful strike action earlier this month after achieving record ballot results of over 60% turnout.

FE members joined the fantastic 'march in the snow' for pay and pensions in London. Branches reported that despite the snow, it was one of the best strikes and picket lines they have ever held.

In the run up to the strikes a number of employers have started to make offers as more strikes loom. Epping College offered 3% - members rejected it as it was related to performance. Redbridge staff may be offered 10 days holiday and a 6% pay rise in a parity award.

Insulting offers

Lambeth college floated a 1% offer next year, this follows 9 years without a pay rise. Sandwell college was offered 0.5% one-off with some lacklustre proposals for future pay deals. Hackney were offered a £400 one-off payment with strings linked to cuts to remission.



Sally Hunt joined pickets at Lambeth College during the last strikes

Tower Hamlets College, who are part of the New City College Group with Hackney and Redbridge, were offered 0.2% - with strings!

The money is there

Members will rightly see these offers as insulting and far short of our expectations. The lavish pay rises at the top following mergers angers members. Colleges can afford more. The slogan 'the money is there, we want our share' is popular with members.

Cracks appear

In the face of more action the employers' intransigence is starting to break.

In this situation building momentum is critical. With more action things can develop quickly, as we have seen in the pensions dispute.

That's why the next 3 days of strike action will be important.

We should push out into the broader movement to seek solidarity. There are plans to focus the heat on employers with protests and lobbies of governors.

Second wave

The Lewisham and Southwark branch ballot on pay opened on Friday.

They are part of a second wave of action that could include up to 148 FE branches who have submitted claims.

UCU members employed by Hull College group are also balloting for strike action, against plans to cut 231 posts. The college has threatened to dismiss any staff who refuse to sign up to new contracts.

Escalate the action

A brilliant strike committee meeting in London discussed ideas to escalate. If management refuse to make serious offers then more strike action will be notified by UCU in the run up to the exams period.

The pension strikes in HE have shown what is possible. If you escalate quickly, provide leadership and put your faith in members you can win.