



FE NEWS

Issue 1 – NOVEMBER 2008

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INTRODUCTION

A NEW ORGANISING APPROACH FOR FE MEMBERS IN SCOTLAND

Working in Scotland's FE colleges, you've already seen big changes in your work, your conditions and perhaps even the security of your job.

UNISON is the main union for support staff working in further education colleges.

Our members working in FE include learning support staff, librarians, IT specialists, technicians, professional staff, administrative and business support staff, cleaners, canteen staff and estate management staff.

With the highest number of reps and regional full-time officers who negotiate with your college management, UNISON can deliver the support you need.

To support our members in FE, an organising team has been established to develop an organising approach within the sector. The team consists of:

- Nancy Kelly Regional Organiser
- Kevin O'Neil Area Organiser
- Jane Fielding Local Organiser

Over the coming months, members of this team will be in direct contact with stewards and activists to offer support and assistance to help with recruitment events at colleges across Scotland.

The team will also be assisting with setting up local networking groups. We are hoping that these networking groups will be able to provide a forum for UNISON FE members to get together to discuss key issues, share ideas on recruitment and organisation and how to get across the message that UNISON is the union for FE staff in Scotland.

LOCAL NETWORKING

The establishment of local forums would be a means of addressing some key UNISON priorities such as, recruitment, development and organisation. It could also be focus for agreeing common pay claims across all colleges in each area based upon local circumstances.

Each forum has elected delegates to sit on the new Scottish FE Sector Committee. Membership of the forums is open to all UNISON FE Shop Stewards within that area.

Of the forums suggested it is recognised that their boundaries maybe subject to change following consultation.

The initial meetings of the forums concentrated on mapping accurate membership information, identifying recruitment opportunities and indentifying joint training needs.

Page 3 will give you further details of where and when the 3 Local Forum meetings will take place.

If you want to attend your local forum meeting, then please email Sandie Thomas
s.thomas2@unison.co.uk

FE SECTOR COMMITTEE

UNISON Scotland's Finance Development and Organisation Sub Committee, earlier this year, agreed to set up a Scottish FE Sector Committee. The FE Sector Committee will be a stand alone Committee and will not be a sub-group of the Local Government Committee.

The Scottish FE sector has enormous potential for growth both in term of UNISON membership and local organisation. Membership density is on the whole low (between 25% and 30% overall) and the sector has been fragmented by the rise in local bargaining and the evolution of local grading structures, differing terms and conditions etc. The creation of a formal Committee would fulfil the following needs and undertake the following functions:

- Development of UNISON's responses to strategic issues such as the work going on through the STUC on staff governance across Scotland.
- Collecting and sharing bargaining information across the sector.
- Identifying recruitment and organising opportunities through the Local Forums.
- Electing UNISON representatives to appropriate internal and external bodies.
- Reporting through the appropriate UNISON Scottish structures.

3 Local Forums (East of Scotland, West of Scotland and North of Scotland) have been set up. These rough geographical splits are based around membership numbers and therefore would be subject to change as matters develop. Each forum has elected delegates to the FE Sector Committee. This has created a 12 members Committee which would be supported by the lead officer for FE.

It is suggested that the FE Sector Committee meets 4 times a year and reports to UNISON's Scottish Committee.

The FE delegate meeting on Wednesday 5 November 2008 elected the inaugural Scottish FE Sector Committee and this Committee will have the responsibility for taking forward UNISON's organisation priorities in Scottish FE Colleges.

YOUR NEW FE SECTOR COMMITTEE

At the inaugural meeting of the FE Sector Committee, Jim McCrystal (Reid Kerr College) and Karen Dawson (Elmwood College) were elected as Chair and Vice-Chair.

Helen Craig (Forth Valley College) and Shelia Meikle (Central College of Commerce) were elected to the National FE and Sixth Form Colleges Sector Committee.

Margo MacMillan (Kilmarnock College) was elected to UNISON's Scottish Council and Jim McCrystal (Reid Kerr College) to UNISON's Scottish Committee.

Martin Clark (Glasgow Metropolitan College) was elected to UNISON's Scottish Health and Safety Committee.

The new sector committee members are:

Jim McCrystal (Reid Kerr College); Karen Dawson (Elmwood College); Helen Craig (Forth Valley College); Martin Clark (Glasgow Metropolitan College); Anne Dunlop (Jewel & Esk College); Ann Gamble (Glasgow Metropolitan College); Margo MacMillan (Kilmarnock College); Eric McLean (Moray College); Shelia Meikle (Central College of Commerce); Ritchie Rennie (Perth College); Caroline Thomson (Inverness College) and Ted Thompson (Dumfries and Galloway College).

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Thursday 5th February 2009 12pm – 3:00pm
UNISON House 14 West Campbell Street Glasgow

Thursday 2nd July 2009 12pm – 3:00pm
UNISON Douglas House 60 Belford Road Edinburgh

Thursday 15th October 2009 12pm – 3:00pm
UNISON House 14 West Campbell Street Glasgow

Thursday 10 December 2009 12pm – 3:00pm
UNISON Douglas House 60 Belford Road Edinburgh

WEST NETWORK MEETINGS

UNISON House 14 West Campbell Street Glasgow

Wednesday 7th January 2009 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Thursday 11th June 2009 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Thursday 5th November 2009 1:30pm – 3:00pm

EAST NETWORK MEETINGS

UNISON Douglas House 60 Belford Road Edinburgh

Thursday 15th January 2009 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Thursday 18th June 2009 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Thursday 12th November 2009 1:30pm – 3:00pm

NORTH NETWORK MEETINGS

UNISON Grampian Resource Centre 7 Alford Place Aberdeen

Thursday 22nd January 2009 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Thursday 22nd June 2009 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Thursday 19th November 2009 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Please email Sandie Thomas to confirm your attendance at these meetings

s.thomas2@unison.co.uk

We need your help!

This is your newsletter, so we want to hear your views and your stories. If you have anything that you want to share with your fellow colleagues, then please forward any items to:

Kevin O'Neil at:
k.oneil@unison.co.uk

If you need assistance with this, then call Kevin on: 0131 226 0068

CONTACT

We are currently creating a database of FE members so that we can communicate more effectively. If you would like to be kept informed of what UNISON is doing on your behalf, then please complete the form below and return it to:
Kevin O'Neil, UNISON, 60 Belford Road, Edinburgh, EH4 3UQ or email k.oneil@unison.co.uk

Name

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UNISON Scotland Branch

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College

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Address

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Email

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Contact Telephone Number

If you have any comments about or require any further information regarding any of the issues raised in this publication please contact: Kevin O'Neil, Area Organiser – k.oneil@unison.co.uk or 0131 226 0068