

National Bargaining News

October 2017

News from the national negotiations

Lessons learned?

It's been four long and frustrating months since our last update on NJNC negotiations, but finally, here we are! We have had several meetings in recent weeks. The first was a full day conference on 'lessons learned' from national bargaining which took place on 21 September. This session was facilitated by John Sturrock QC, the independent facilitator appointed by the Scottish Government in May 2017. In attendance were John Kemp of the Scottish Funding Council and representatives from the Scottish Government, EIS, UNISON and management side. The meeting followed a series of telephone interviews between the SFC, Scottish Government and negotiators from both the EIS and management sides, discussing the national bargaining processes, the events that led to the 2017 industrial action, and what was required to ensure that the bargaining structure worked effectively in the future. This will be written up in a report which we are keen to read...!

The key outputs from the 'Lessons Learned' session were a commitment to hold regular meetings, to seek to resolve the outstanding issues in the May 2017 Agreement (the "purple bits" by the end of October), and to improve on communications and accuracy/sharing of data. We also agreed to seek a joint meeting with the Scottish Government to discuss their role in the process. We had originally planned an NJNC meeting on 21 September and were frustrated when this was changed to accommodate the conference. The NJNC finally met on 5 October—a half day meeting as the support staff side table met in the morning. Much of this meeting was spent on clarifying and agreeing the positions of both sides and on bringing new management side negotiators 'up to speed'; we also raised outstanding issues on pay harmonisation relating to NESCol and Perth College. Towards the end of the meeting, progress was made on two key issues—a response from management to our pay claim,

and further discussion on the 'purple bits' of the May 2017 deal.

Our pay claim was for £1000 flat-rated. Management rejected this claim some months ago but had not made a counter offer; we received a counter offer yesterday which we rejected on three grounds: it was unconsolidated, it would not apply to all lecturing staff—any partial deal takes us away from harmonisation and the principles of national bargaining, and it was not enough.

We look forward to further negotiations at the next meeting; while we have not been able to secure an October date due to half term variations across the country, we have been assured that two meetings will take place in November. We believe we are getting closer to agreement on the final elements of the May 2017 agreement, and once this is finalised, members will have the full details of the deal and an opportunity to vote to ratify this agreement.

EIS Political Fund: vote YES!

The EIS is required to have a ballot on the renewal of our political fund, and you should receive a ballot paper by 16th October. We are urging you to vote YES. The EIS is not (and has never been) affiliated to a political party, but the Political Fund is vital on campaigning on educational issues. **Use your vote!**

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