

REPORT OF STUC HE/FE FORUM MEETING HELD ON 30TH SEPTEMBER 2015

To: Scottish Education RISC

The above meeting was held at the STUC Offices, representatives from Unison, UCU, EIS, GMB were in attendance and I attended on behalf of Unite. The main topics of discussion included:

Devolving Pay Negotiations to Scotland in HE & Scottish Bargaining

All unions agreed there was no appetite to devolve Pay to Scotland however a discussion took place regarding the potential benefits of a sub committee in addition to JINCHES to discuss specific bargaining issues from a Scottish perspective as currently there is no mechanism in place for this. Currently JINCHES only negotiates Pay, other significant issues impacting our members in HE include the living wage, zero hours contracts, casual hours, workloads etc. There was a general consensus that this would be beneficial. The UCU wanted a prescriptive list of issues that such a committee would have within its remit to understand more about the potential impacts on bargaining.

It was proposed that a way ahead could be to undertake a position paper and scoping exercise and for the unions to launch a joint campaign. **I would welcome the views of the RISC on this issue.**

Update on FE Forum/University Advisory Forum

It was noted that the unions had not been invited to recent FE Forum meetings and that no meetings of the UAF had been held. It was agreed that the STUC would write a letter in support of the UAF with concerns expressed over the effectiveness of the Forums and the lack of involvement of the trade unions.

National Bargaining in FE

A summary was provided on the state of negotiations, i.e. a 1% pay offer. Negotiations have been ongoing with no current agreement on Pay, members across FE colleges have been balloted and all unions are currently in dispute. A further meeting with Colleges Scotland is due to take place on 17th December 2015.

Commission for Widening Access

A discussion took place on how HE can be more accessible. The STUC has taken evidence from Schools, FE, Universities, and trade unions. The interim report has since been published, a copy of which has been shared with the RISC. The STUC asked if the unions could provide further evidence on the difficulties for students in accessing FE/HE, e.g. Admissions and Support Staff may be able to give examples of the difficulties faced by

students. It was agreed that the Admissions process needs to change with removal of personal statements, access to childcare, better provision for people with support needs, skills for asylum seekers, etc. Any feedback from the RISC would be welcome.

Common Cause Statement – Universities Scotland

A copy of this Statement is attached to this report.

HE Governance Bill

The STUC/Unions have submitted Evidence and the UCU will also provide oral evidence, Staff and Students should have more say on Governance/election of management. A copy of the response is attached to this report.

Alison Maclean – Regional Officer

26th November 2015