

Tuesday 16 August 2016

Statement on the Outcome of the UNISON Ballot

Shona Struthers, Chief Executive, Colleges Scotland Employers' Association, said:

“We acknowledge the outcome of today’s ballot in favour of industrial action, however believe that less than 20% of support staff across the sector have participated in this ballot.

“Strikes will cause huge disruption to students across the country when many will be looking forward to starting new courses or continuing their studies at the next level. UNISON still has an opportunity to avert strike action and we hope their members will make every effort to avoid damaging student’s studies and prospects.

“UNISON has been misrepresenting the facts of the agreement made with lecturers in April 2016. UNISON’s case for strike action is based on factually confused comparisons between the deal done with lecturers in April and the agreement that we reached with support staff in January. It is important to understand that the settlement for lecturers was a two-year deal while the support staff settlement was only for 2015/16 and negotiations are ongoing for 2016/17.

“UNISON claim that the flat cash settlement received by support staff amounts to £230 compared to a £450 flat cash pay uplift for lecturers – this is a misrepresentation of the facts. In simple terms for a college support staff member earning less than £30,000 in 2015 the combination of last year’s settlement with the current offer will equate to an increase of £630 for the two years. Over the same two-year period, for an employee earning £22,000 or less, the settlements will equate to £800. In either case, these increases exceed public sector pay policy. Additionally, in 2015 support staff were granted two additional days of leave and many saw a reduction in their working hours with no loss of pay.

“In spite of this, UNISON is demanding a flat cash increase of £450 for all support staff for 2016/17. According to our calculations this would add £3.2m to the college sector payroll. This is not a financially sustainable position.”

ENDS

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