

Thursday 28 March 2019

Comment on EIS-FELA Ballot Result

John Gribben, Director of Employment Services at Colleges Scotland Employers' Association, said:

“Only a third of all lecturers at Scotland’s colleges have voted to support EIS-FELA’s appalling ploy, and even among EIS-FELA members, only a minority supported this attack on students. We are extremely disappointed that the EIS-FELA is committed to recklessly gambling with the futures of college students. It is not the behaviour anyone would expect from a professional body.

“By withholding assessment results, the EIS-FELA will wreak havoc with students’ life opportunities, as without external verification by awarding bodies, they would be unable to achieve their qualifications, meaning they would be unable to move on to other courses at college or university, finalise their apprenticeships or move into jobs conditional on passing courses. This is an unprecedented and disgraceful attack on students at a critical time for them and their futures.

“Lecturers in Scotland are by far the best paid in the UK, and the pay harmonisation rises from 2017 to 2020, combined with the current pay offer on the table from colleges, equate to a national average increase of over £5,000 – or more than 12% – but the EIS-FELA has rejected this and refuses to make any concessions or compromises at all.

“Lecturers have had significant financial gains and improvements in terms and conditions over the same 2017-20 pay period, including an enviable 62 days’ holiday per year and a reduction in class contact time to 23 hours per week, and the EIS-FELA must realise that the current additional offer from colleges – costing over £10 million – is coming from cuts to college budgets.

“The EIS-FELA has gone out on strike four days this year so far without ever formally putting any of our eight offers to their members and their refusal to make any compromises or meaningfully negotiate is preventing an agreement being made. By contrast, the colleges have successfully negotiated a two-and-a-half-year agreement with the support staff trade unions, UNISON, Unite and GMB, and the EIS as a corporate body has agreed a three-year deal for teachers with the Scottish Government and COSLA which involved compromise on both sides.

“We will continue to meet with the EIS-FELA to resolve this dispute for the sake of the students, who stand to lose out the most by the EIS-FELA’s reckless behaviour. The number of lecturers out on strike has waned by over a fifth throughout this dispute and we urge the EIS-FELA to engage in a meaningful two-way process and compromise rather than continue to demand more pay without offering anything in return.”

ENDS

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