

**Wednesday 31 August 2016**

**Comment on the UNISON Decision to Strike**

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

“UNISON’s announcement of its decision to take strike action on Tuesday 6 September 2016 will bring massive disruption to students and teaching staff just at the point of many students starting new courses or continuing their studies at the next level.

“UNISON is demanding a flat cash increase of £450 for all support staff for 2016/17, however their members are already getting a good deal which exceeds public sector pay. UNISON members have been offered the same percentage increase as lecturers which equates to 2.5% over two years. At the request of unions, the percentage has been offered as a cash increase. This means that support staff earning less than £22,000 have been offered a £400 increase to address low pay and for those earning more than £22,000, the increase amounts to £230.

“Their demands come at a time when many of their members received above inflation pay rises earlier this year, on top of a reduction in working hours and additional holiday leave. According to our calculations UNISON’s demands would add £3.3m to the college sector payroll, which is not financially sustainable going forward. Their demands don’t seem to recognise current public sector finances”.

“It is disappointing that the union has sought to take a confrontational stance that could bring major disruption to students. For the sake of students in colleges across the country, we hope that UNISON will abandon their strike plans and accept the reasonable offer.”

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact Joanne Buchan, Public Affairs and Communications Officer:**

Tel: 01786 892012

Mobile: 07590 229 707

Email: [joanne.buchan@collegesscotland.ac.uk](mailto:joanne.buchan@collegesscotland.ac.uk)