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**Vote now to save USS**  
  
The consultative ballot on USS pensions closes on Wednesday 18 October on the eve of an important meeting between UCU negotiators and the employers.  
Our negotiators need your support. Current proposals could cut benefits for younger staff and mean those nearer retirement may need to work longer.  
  
A strong turnout and support for action will show the employers that we’re prepared to defend our pensions. If you work in a university covered by USS please support your negotiators and [vote now as a matter of urgency to defend your pension](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/32517/151504/3178/1/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMTMgT2N0b2JlciAyMDE3&x=2ee49c9c).  
  
**Free membership launch: hundreds sign up in first week**  
  
Over 400 new members joined UCU for free in the first week of our new offer aimed at unionising early career education staff. As employment becomes ever more insecure and exploitative for new and younger staff, we’ve taken the bold move of offering free membership to thousands of PhD students employed to teach and those teaching in further education colleges without a teachers’ contract.  
  
We say: it’s time to break the vicious cycle of low-security employment and low union membership amongst younger and casual workers. Please help us secure the future of the profession by sharing this offer in your workplace with [full details and downloadable posters and leaflets here](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/32517/151504/4685/2/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMTMgT2N0b2JlciAyMDE3&x=bb94cae8).   
  
**Further education pay consultation**  
  
FE (England) members have sent a clear message to the employers in the consultative ballot which closed on 29 September with 75% of those voting saying they would be prepared to strike for a better offer than the national 1%. UCU is now consulting with branches about their participation in strike ballots and we will be in touch soon about next steps.  
  
[See here for the full update including:](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/32517/151504/4792/3/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMTMgT2N0b2JlciAyMDE3&x=7d61e5b8)  
  
1. In the news  
2. Leeds University UCU strike to stop ‘sackers’ charter’  
3. Further education staff training needs survey  
4. Britain needs a pay rise: join the TUC day of action, 17 October  
5. Survey shows dissatisfaction with how universities are run  
6. 'To Walk In Your Shoes' play, 22 October, University of Huddersfield  
7. National officer and NEC elections in 2018  
8. Have your say on adult education  
9. World Mental Health Day 2017  
  
All the best  
  
Justine Stephens  
UCU head of campaigns