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**FE fights back with next wave of action**  
  
This week members at 13 colleges fought back for FE with solid picket lines and a fantastic show of solidarity and determination to win a better deal for further education staff and you can [follow all the strike action, see photos from the picket lines and read a huge number of messages on our online ‘wall of support’ here.](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/7135/1/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDEgRmVicnVhcnkgMjAxOQ%3d%3d&x=d93803c9) Thanks to everyone that has sent in messages and photos. The next wave of strikes is 20, 21 and 22 March (12 February for Kendal College) so please keep your messages of support coming. [Several colleges have now agreed deals or begun to engage properly with UCU on pay and conditions](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/7566/2/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDEgRmVicnVhcnkgMjAxOQ%3d%3d&x=ff7f84cb) but we need to keep the pressure on with and the support from across the union strong.   
  
**Fair pay, equal pay: vote now in the HE ballot**  
  
Members at [higher education institutions included in the pay and equality ballot](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/6595/3/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDEgRmVicnVhcnkgMjAxOQ%3d%3d&x=2b666bcf) should have received your paper to vote. [Please let us know if you lost or never received it or if you’ve already voted](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/7504/4/) remind your colleagues to do the same ([share this excellent video by Cambridge UCU](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/6148/5/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDEgRmVicnVhcnkgMjAxOQ%3d%3d&x=83cd8b82)).  
  
**In the news**

The second wave of strikes over pay hit 13 English colleges this week. UCU puts universities on notice that it will name and shame any that refuse to denounce a plan to allow the work of sacked staff to be submitted to the Research Framework Exercise. Unconditional offers are under the spotlight again. The Prime Minister is taken to task for saying her government respects further education, while her new universities minister uses his first speech to praise humanities and question the focus on salary to measure the value of a degree.  
You can [read all about this and more here](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/7586/6/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDEgRmVicnVhcnkgMjAxOQ%3d%3d&x=ed37819e).

**REF submission guidance will entrench casualisation**  
  
UCU has condemned the decision of UK funding councils to allow higher education (HE) institutions to submit to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) the work of staff who have been made redundant. [The submission guidance](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/7571/7/) was published yesterday and has removed [reference to a proposed ban on the practice](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/7572/8/) which UCU argues gives the green light to further embed a 'hire and fire' culture across the sector.  
  
**UCU USS national dispute committee**  
  
The national dispute committee (NDC), which is charged with giving a representative steer to the USS pensions dispute, has published a motion which it encourages branches to propose at their upcoming general meetings. [Please see here for the motion text](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/7164/9/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDEgRmVicnVhcnkgMjAxOQ%3d%3d&x=18a05ff5) and a brief introduction. The NDC has also [published a briefing note with suggestions on how you can lobby your employer](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/7569/10/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDEgRmVicnVhcnkgMjAxOQ%3d%3d&x=becf007f) during the current consultation on the USS valuation.  
  
**Guidance for EU workers**  
  
UCU has teamed up with Thompsons Solicitors to publish [this guidance for EU workers applying for settled status](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/7568/11/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDEgRmVicnVhcnkgMjAxOQ%3d%3d&x=5c4e23e5) which explains the current legal rights of EU workers and how this might change post-Brexit.

**UCU subscriptions consultation**  
  
Congress 2018 passed [motion 6 requiring the honorary treasurer and NEC to review our subscription rates and bands.](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/7390/12/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogMDEgRmVicnVhcnkgMjAxOQ%3d%3d&x=fe4cc6b8) As part of this review, [members are invited to submit views](mailto:subssurvey@ucu.org.uk) on the principles set out in the motion, by Friday 15 February 2019.  
  
**Philippines teacher unionists under threat**  
  
Teacher trade union leaders in the Philippines have received death threats and union members are being monitored by the police. [Please add your voice to the international protest to defend the rights of education trade unionists.](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/66799/151504/7570/13/)   
  
Best wishes  
  
Justine Stephens  
UCU head of campaigns