Dear colleague  
  
**In this week’s campaigns update:   
  
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**1. In the news this week**USS members warned they could lose as much as £20,000 a year ,compared to colleagues in the Teachers’ Pension Scheme, if the employers’ changes are forced through. UCU challenges USS deficit. At Liberal Democrat conference Vince Cable slams and praises the work of business secretary, Vince Cable. Transparency issues King’s and Plymouth. More ridicule for LeSoCo (do you know what it is?) and Germany axes all tuition fees. [Read all about it here](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1445/0/).   
  
**2. USS dispute – defend your pension**   
The ballot regarding USS, to defend your pensions, opened on Wednesday (1 October). All USS branches have now received campaigns materials. [You can view our materials and access resources here](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1436/0/). All USS members should by now have recieved their ballot paper. If you have not received or have lost your ballot paper, you are now entitled to [complete the online duplicate ballot paper request form here](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1446/0/). Please note that this form should ONLY be used if you have not received or have lost your ballot paper. get involved in helping your branch and your union secure a high turnout and a strong YES vote.    
**Why casualised staff must vote yes!**At a time when insecurity is growing in both employment and retirement, it’s vital for all members to stand together in defence of USS pensions. [Read this blog post](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1447/0/) and [download and distribute this leaflet](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1448/0/) to all casualised staff, encourage them to vote yes to strike action and if they’re not already members, urge them to vote yes to industrial action.   
  
**3. FE members in England to strike on Tuesday 14 October**As members will be aware, the union’s further education committee (FEC) has agreed to call strike action on Tuesday 14 October after further education members in England. Campaign materials have been dispatched to branches, [you can view them here](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/505/0/). Please stay in touch with your branch officers in advance of Tuesday’s action.   
  
**4. Anti-casualisation day of action: Wednesday 5 November 2014**   
UCU is holding a day of action against casualised contracts on Wednesday 5 November. This will be an opportunity for UCU members and branches to put pressure on politicians and employers to tackle the scandalous levels of casualised employment in post-secondary education. We will have more details on how you can help support the day of action soon, but all branches have been asked to organise events so contact your officers and find out what is being planned.   
  
**5. TUC demonstrations Saturday 18 October 2014**Trade unionists and campaigners calling for decent pay and a fairer economy will be marching in London, Glasgow and Belfast on Saturday 18 October. UCU members will be assembling in [Glasgow at Glasgow Green, 10am](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1449/0/), in [Belfast at 12pm at Writer’s Square](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1450/0/) and in [London at 11am on Embankment](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1327/0/) at zone 11 numbered lamppost [outside Temple tube here](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1451/0/) (Please note that Temple station is likely to be closed on the day – use Waterloo, Southwark, Blackfriars, St. Paul’s or City Thameslink instead). Please contact [ebailey@ucu.org.uk](mailto:ebailey@ucu.org.uk) if you are able to help steward the London event.   
  
**6. UCU: standing up for casual staff in adult education**   
UCU’s anti-casualisation site features [a story about the union defending the pay of casualised staff in a Lincolnshire Adult Education service.](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1452/0/)   
  
**7. New intellectual property service: UCU IP Protect**We’re pleased to announce the launch of a new intellectual property advisory service, UCU IP Protect.  Members are entitled to up to 1.5 hours of expert legal advice on intellectual property rights and further information can be found at [the UCU Support Centre](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1453/0/) along with a wide range of advice and other legal services (please note this is not yet available to members in Northern Ireland but we hope to remedy this soon).   
  
**8. Ofsted consultation on new inspection framework**Ofsted has launched a consultation [on proposals for a new inspection framework](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1456/0/) across maintained schools, academies, further education and skills providers, non-association independent schools and registered early years settings.  To contribute your views to the union’s response please email [anartey@ucu.org.uk](mailto:anartey@ucu.org.uk) We also encourage you to send in your own views.  This is an important opportunity to highlight that graded lesson observations are an ineffective method of assessing staff competence and performance as highlighted by the [O’Leary report](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1458/0/) which surveyed over 4,000 UCU members.   
  
**9. Events, updates and publications**   
  
**Trustee, national officer and NEC elections** (including UCU Scotland vacancies) – nominations now open  
Nominations are currently open for more than 30 vacancies on UCU’s national executive committee, including UCU Scotland vacancies, for terms of office beginning 25 May 2015. The deadline for completed nominations to be received at UCU’s head office is 5pm on Wednesday 12 November.  [Information, including the full calling notice and nomination forms can be found here](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/41/0/) or requested from Kay Metcalfe at UCU’s head office, email [kmetcalfe@ucu.org.uk](mailto:kmetcalfe@ucu.org.uk).   
  
**A4e prison elections**A4e prison education branch has begun their annual process to choose local and regional reps. If you are interested in becoming a rep, or would like to nominate someone then you can [find all the details here](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/564/0/).   
  
**UCU biennial stress survey**  
Thanks to all of you who have responded to the survey so far.  We understand that work commitments mean everyone is very busy, but if you haven't already, [perhaps you would be able to find 20 minutes this weekend to respond](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1454/0/).   
  
**Equality conference – 13 -15 November 2014**The deadline to apply is Monday 13 October 12 noon. There are still a few places left – [for details and how to register see here](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1455/0/).   
  
**Motivated or Mandated: engaging adults in learning and supporting them to succeed**   
UCU, NIACE, RAPAL, and NRDC [joint conference for members teaching English and maths to adults](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/1396/0/), at UCU Carlow Street, London on Monday 20 October.   
  
**Holocaust Memorial Day 2015**   
Please make a note that [Holocaust Memorial Day](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/128275/1215804/788/0/)2015 is on Tuesday 27 January UCU will be supporting events and launching new materials on the theme of ‘Keep The Memory Alive’ as part of our continued campaigning work against antisemitism.   
  
All the best,   
  
Justine Stephens  
UCU Head of Campaigns