

## **Amicus in the Higher Education Sector**

### **Issue 3 – December 2004.**

#### **University Cuts in Chemistry Departments**

Planned cuts at Exeter University could mean the loss of 130 jobs as the university tries to limit an overspend. Exeter University has indicated its projected deficit has risen to £4.46m and has proposed to cut courses in music, Italian and Chemistry. Dundee University has also announced the closure of core Chemistry courses due to lack of demand and Anglia Polytechnic is cutting course options from 2,000 to 500 from 2006, again due to lack of demand. Mike Robinson National Officer commented “the cutting of Chemistry courses is of great concern to myself, Amicus and our members. Many of our members are technicians working in Chemistry departments and this could have a profound effect on their jobs. We also have concerns regarding the DTI five year plan with it’s emphasis on science and technology, how will the cuts in Chemistry courses affect the future of science in this country and it’s influence abroad, we hope to be discussing this issue in the near future with the Minister for Science”

#### **Current Pension System Lets Women Down**

Women are being badly let down by the current pensions system, and unless major reform takes place young women new to work will have as little opportunity of providing for their old age as their grandmothers did. A new report from the TUC, ‘Time for Action’ says that a combination of low pay, part time work, jobs that do not have pensions and shorter working lives mean that, compared to men, women are almost always going to be short changed in retirement. The report says there are more women at work than ever before (56% of women over 16 have jobs, compared to 71% of men), but that more than four in ten (43% or 5.2 million) of these women work part time. It is working part time that is one of the biggest factors contributing to poor pensions for women, says the report. Women who work part time earn 22% less than women who work full time, and the pay and pensions penalty paid by women in the UK is amongst the biggest in Europe. Mike Robinson National Officer said “the pensions crisis has a very definite female face with women being penalised and losing out for taking time out to bring up their children. Action is needed to stop this continuing pensions inequality” For further information about Time for Action please go to [www.tuc.org.uk/pensions/tuc-9080-f0.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/pensions/tuc-9080-f0.cfm)

#### **Higher Education in Scotland**

Universities Scotland and the Higher Education Unions in Scotland have received funding from the SHEFC to assist in the Job Evaluation process. Amicus agreed to a joint bid on the basis that there is a commitment to partnership and collaborative working and that the bid stated the trade unions preferred option for the commended model pay structure in appendix C of the Framework Agreement. It was agreed by the SHEFC for an allocation of £5m in non recurrent monies to implement the Framework Agreement and to support modernising human resources management. 18 institutions will be allocated £100,000 each plus a proportion of the remaining

£3.2m based on the extent of work required to implement the new pay structure. The allocation of funding is conditional upon the institutions implementing the Framework Agreement according to the timescales and mechanisms set out in the agreement. Institutions may only use the money towards the additional costs of activity that meet the purposes of the funding and each institution must provide detailed information on their modernisation strategy and progress reports on a regular basis to SHEFC. Fiona Farmer, lead officer for Higher Education in Scotland said "it has taken some time to get this extra funding agreed for Scotland, however the most significant costs of the Framework Agreement will be the recurrent costs and these will be met out of the Scottish Executive's Spending Review 2004, which indicated cash increases intended to support several objectives including pay modernisation" If you would like further information about the Framework Agreement in Scotland or information about Job Evaluation in Higher Education in Scotland please contact Fiona Farmer on [fiona.farmer@amicustheunion.org](mailto:fiona.farmer@amicustheunion.org)

### **You Could be a Learning Representative**

Thanks to the support of the Government's Union Learning Fund (England) Amicus has appointed Regional Learning Organisers in each of the English regions to advise on the appointment/election of learning representatives and organise training for them. For members, the learning representative is someone they can go to for information about learning and training, someone whose advice they can trust. If you are interested in becoming a learning representative or would like further information about training courses please contact your regional office or check out the Amicus web site on [www.amicustheunion.org](http://www.amicustheunion.org)

### **Amicus Joint Public Services Group**

Amicus has set up a joint Public Services group at National Officer level to ensure a smooth, cohesive and structured approach towards issues and campaigns within the union, and to co-ordinate activities to protect and advance public sector issues at both TUC and Labour party level. The group includes the National Officers from the Health sector (Gail Cartmail), Higher Education sector (Mike Robinson) and Local Government sector (John Allott). The National Officers met this week to draft a strategic plan for 2005 and what campaigns to take forward. The group are seeking a meeting at the highest level in Government to discuss concerns over the extension of the working age limit. One of the points they wish to raise is that some employees will not be able to continue working past 60 due to the demanding capacity of their work. An example of this joined up approach was visible with the Public Sector rally regarding Public Sector pensions. If you would like further information about the Joint Public Services Group please contact Mike Robinson on [mike.robinson@amicustheunion.org](mailto:mike.robinson@amicustheunion.org)

### **Busting the Busters Training Course**

There is a two day OCN accredited course for union organisers, officers and senior representatives being held by the TUC on 25 and 26 January 2005 at Congress House. The course will be delivered jointly by the TUC Organising Academy and Andy Banks, Director of Organisation of the IFPTE in the United States. The sort of issues being covered by the course include the following; forms of union busting being used

by employers, the prevalence of union busting in the UK – is it on the rise? successful responses to union busting and how unions can work together nationally and internationally to stop union busting. The course is FREE, to apply for a place please contact Anjum Klair on 020-7467-1382 or email [aklair@tuc.org.uk](mailto:aklair@tuc.org.uk)  
For further information about the course or the TUC Organising Academy programme please contact Carl Roper on 07733-221263 or email [cropper@tuc.org.uk](mailto:cropper@tuc.org.uk)

### **Promoting Science, Technology and Engineering for Women**

The Office of Science and Technology at the DTI has set up a unit to tackle women's under representation in the science, engineering and technology (SET) community. The aim is to improve the recruitment, retention and progression of women through SET education and employment and to increase their involvement in shaping SET policy. In particular, the unit supports organisations and networks of women within the science community, develops policies to mainstream gender in SET in the UK and the EU, develops and encourages international good practice in the field of SET for women and provides up to date statistics on the state of women's participation in SET. The long term objective is to have a SET community in which it is tacitly assumed that women can have successful, rewarding careers based upon equality of opportunity at every level and throughout all institutions. Mike Robinson, National Officer said "this is an excellent initiative, Amicus is fully supportive of attracting more women into science, technology and engineering. Amicus is a union that promotes equality and diversity and this Government initiative supports that" For further information about the SET unit please go to [www.set4women.gov.uk/set4women/pset4w.htm](http://www.set4women.gov.uk/set4women/pset4w.htm)

### **Paid Maternity Leave to be Extended**

Paid maternity leave is to be extended from 6 – 9 months from 2007 under plans announced by the Chancellor. The Government aims to increase paid leave to 12 months by the ends of the next parliament. Mothers will also be given the right to transfer their entitlement to paid leave to the father. Other measure included in the Government's 10 year child care strategy includes; Government will consult on allowing parents with children over the age of 6 to ask their employers for flexible working arrangements (currently children must be under 6 for parents to request flexible working), from April 2005, all employer-supported childcare, not just childcare in work-based nurseries, will qualify for national Insurance (NI) and income tax relief, capped at £50 per week. Mike Robinson National Officer, commented "this is excellent news for parents with young children and those who would like a more flexible approach to the care of their children. The Government continues to acknowledge that both parents have a role in raising their children by extending these rights, unions have campaigned for many years for this kind of comprehensive approach. We commend the Chancellor for making the family a priority when it comes to a work-life balance. It is now important that we extend flexible working rights to all carers, including those caring for parents and disabled relatives" For further information about maternity rights please go to [www.acas.org.uk/faqs/parents.html](http://www.acas.org.uk/faqs/parents.html)

### **Education Must Become Part of the Global Market**

Launching its first “international strategy” for education and skills, the Government has announced a package that includes offering foreign languages to all primary school children by 2010, twinning with schools around the world and encouraging more universities to establish branches in developing countries such as China and India. The impetus of the strategy is to educate future adults with an understanding of how countries were increasingly dependent on one another. The strategy also explains the Government's desire to expand UK education and training exports which already make a £10bn contribution to the UK economy and were a crucial boost to trade and inward investment. The global market for international tertiary education is expected to rise from 2.1m places in 2003 to 5.8m by 2010 and the UK needs its share of that market. The Government has already exceeded targets for adding an additional 50,000 non-European students to higher education by 2005. The Government have set as an example Nottingham University and King's College London, who have both established campuses in China, while continuing to develop the use of information and communications technology to deliver education, including “virtual universities” Stress was also placed on the importance of business spin-offs from universities by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor said that small businesses were the key to creating wealth and jobs in the coming century and part of that key was the investment in education and training.

### **Universities Slow to Implement Race Policy**

Many universities in England are still in the early stages of tackling race equality, four years after the race Relations Amendment Act became law according to a report from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). A large number are failing to monitor the impact of their policies on staff and students from different ethnic backgrounds and many are yet to develop race equality plans to appropriate levels, and some are in danger of falling foul of the law. Mike Robinson, National Officer commented “it is most disappointing that a significant number of institutions do not appear to have got their act together at a time when increasing publicity about the different and extensive forms of racism in higher education reflect that this is clearly a major issue for the sector. Amicus has always voiced a clear message regarding equality and diversity, we will not tolerate racism or racist behaviour and will do everything we can to encourage universities where we have members to tackle race equality ”

### **Job Evaluation Training Courses for 2005.**

Amicus will be holding the following training courses at Esher College, 25/26 January, HERA training, 21/22 March, HAY training, 5/6 May, HERA training. If you would like to book a place at one of these courses please contact Vera Titmus on [vera.titmus@amicusthunion.org](mailto:vera.titmus@amicusthunion.org) or telephone Vera on 0247-622-7522

**Mike, Janet and Vera would like to thank all our members, officers and colleagues for all their work in the sector throughout the year, and wish you all a happy and restful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.**

This bulletin has been produced by Janet Golds, Research Officer for the Higher Education Sector.

If you have any news items you would like included in the e-bulletin, please contact Janet Golds on [janet.golds@amicustheunion.org](mailto:janet.golds@amicustheunion.org)