



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

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Days Left Until Negotiations: 145

Twenty Amendments to Keep UA Choice Viable

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At its current growth rate, in the next 7 years the cost of UA Choice could double from \$60 million to \$120 million, making healthcare costs unsustainable for both the University and its employees. Substantial changes need to be made to reduce utilization and improve the risk profile of the population. Identifying plan design modifications for cost saving is a priority of the Joint Health Care Committee (JHCC).

At the request of the JHCC, UA engaged an external consultant to conduct a broad assessment of the performance of UA healthcare and wellness plans. After several months of review, the Fall River Consulting Group offered 20 actions for formal consideration by the JHCC. Because the JHCC believes we need a long-term, proactive strategy to control healthcare costs, these 20 recommendations were endorsed. They have now been accepted by UA and most will be put into effect beginning July 1, 2010.

Several of these changes will affect plan pricing. An increase of \$5 in the co-pay for name brand prescription drugs is intended to improve members' utilization of generics, which our pharmacy provider, Caremark, and Fall River found has been less than optimal. Just a 1% increase in the use of generics can save UA Choice \$75,000 a year. In addition to this pricing adjustment, the out-of-pocket limit on co-pays will be raised from \$800 to \$1,000 to account for inflation. These changes are intended both to bridge the growing deficit and to encourage members to consider more thoughtfully their utilization practices.



"Prevention and wellness remain the preeminent means of saving cost."

Another important pharmacy change concerns practices regarding "dispense as written" instructions from your doctor. Starting July 1, 2010, if you get a brand or non-preferred drug when there is a generic drug available, you will pay the difference in cost between generic and brand name drugs in

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NOTE: "Twenty Amendments" article is a reflection of the Joint Health Care Committee's perspective. A union response will be presented in the next issue.

UNAC Prepares for Upcoming 2010 Negotiations

State-wide contract negotiations will begin on September 7, 2010, and the United Academics Collective Bargaining Unit has already begun organizing. From coordinating preliminary communications with union members to attending training conferences, these preparations will continue throughout the summer. The negotiators from all three campuses bring an array of both university and union experience, and will work diligently to finalize the negotiations by December 31, 2010.

Opportunities to lend a hand in the negotiation process still exist. As the Bargaining Unit moves forward, email

communications with faculty at each campus will be established. Volunteering to research negotiation topics beyond the basics of salary is always welcome and appreciated. A survey will be sent to all Union members asking for input.

Negotiations will be lead by Dr. Gerald McBeath with support from Dr. Kate Gordon, Dr. Virginia Mulle, Dr. Abel Bult-Ito. Dr. Carl Shepro will participate as your elected President and brings a wealth of experience to the process as a past member of negotiating teams.



Introducing Your UNAC Collective Bargaining Unit

Abel Bult-Ito is a Professor of Biology at UAF with a specialization in behavioral neuroscience. His research focuses on circadian rhythms in rodents and the development of a mouse model to study the neural mechanisms that control compulsive-like behavior, which may have relevance to obsessive-compulsive behavior (OCD) in humans. He predominantly teaches large enrollment human anatomy and physiology classes at the undergraduate level and currently advise one Ph.D. student and two Master's students. He has been active in United Academics as a Representative Assembly member (2 years), and is currently UAF Organizational Vice President (2 years) and UAF Grievance Chair (3 years).

Abel is very much looking forward to the bargaining process, becoming even more familiar with the collective bargaining agreement, and contributing to a successful team effort.

Kate Gordon joined the UAA Consortium Library as the

Administrative Services Librarian in 2001. With an undergraduate degree in chemistry and a graduate degree in library science, she has often gravitated toward more analytical type of library work. With prior experience as the corporate librarian for United Technologies - Sikorsky Helicopter Corporation, she was tapped by the Consortium Library to provide library liaison activities with UAA's School of Engineering faculty and students.

Since arriving at UAA, Kate has been active in faculty governance with a particular interest in distance education. Having served on numerous UAA and UA Statewide distance education committees, Kate is familiar with the many complex issues that challenge faculty involved in distance delivery of courses. More recently, Kate has devoted energy to assisting others navigate copyright decisions in our higher education setting.

As a member of the upcoming United Academics Collective Bargaining team,

Kate feels obliged to work diligently to maintain productive and beneficial working conditions for her colleagues.

Jerry McBeath is a professor of political science at UAF, where he's worked since 1976. His research and teaching areas include U.S. government and politics (with a focus on political economy, state/local politics, Alaska's political development, federalism), politics of the circumpolar North, US foreign policy, domestic political economy and foreign policies of Taiwan and China, and both domestic and comparative environmental politics.

His community service includes a 9-year stint as an elected member of the Fairbanks Board of Education, where he learned a bit about negotiations. He's been on the representative assembly since United Academics started.

Virginia (Ginny) Mulle is an Associate Professor of Sociology at UAS. Originally from New York, she received her B.A. in Sociology from

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the State University of New York, and an M.S. in Psychology and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Florida (Go Gators!). Areas of specialization are research methods, race and ethnicity, and gender. Her most recent publication (2009) was a chapter entitled "'Without Fish We Would No Longer Exist; The Changing Role of Women in Southeast Alaska's Subsistence Salmon Harvest'" published by the Canadian Circumpolar Institute.

Ginny is also the secretary of the Pacific Sociological Association, and a member of the American Sociological Association and the Rural Sociology

Society. Her activities with United Academics include being a member of the Representative Assembly, the statewide Secretary, a former and current Organizational Vice-President and Grievance Officer at UAS, and in 2003 she was the UAS member of the United Academic Collective Bargaining Team.

She resides in Juneau with her three cats. The cats are unemployed.

Carl Shepro is a Professor of Political Science in the College of Arts & Sciences at UAA. He has been the president of United Academics since August 2005. As president, he sits as an ex-officio

member of all UNAC committees, including the Negotiating Committee. He served as a member of the 2002 and 2005 Negotiating Committees and as an ex-officio member of the 2008 committee.

Professor Shepro has been a member of the UAA faculty since 1988, having previously spent time at UAF and the now Ilisagvik College in Barrow. His field is American government with emphases on national institutions, urban politics, Alaska government and the politics of racial and ethnic minorities.

Advancing Faculty's Role in Shared Governance

The America Association for University Professors (AAUP) will be holding its annual Summer Institute at San Diego State University from July 29th to August 1st. With a variety of workshops and seminars available to attendees, the goal of this conference is to bring together faculty and other academic professionals from across the country to sharpen leadership skills and foster the art of faculty advocacy.

United Academics sponsors several faculty members to attend this Summer Institute. However, attendance is limited. For UNAC members interested in participating this July, please visit the AAUP website at www.aaup.org for additional information or contact Cyndee West at the UAF Union office.

Notes from the 2009 AAUP Summer Institute at Macalester College in St. Paul, MN

~ Nina Chordas, UAS

The AAUP Summer Institute offers a

variety of learning opportunities for faculty. I attended several different presentations and workshops during the conference:

"Legal Roundup: What's New and Noteworthy for Higher Education?" – This presentation focused on academic free speech issues, and how the First Amendment applies to faculty in various aspects of their work.

"Developing and Maintaining Your State Conference" – Alaska does not have a state AAUP conference at this time. Do we meet the criteria for developing one? If so, should we do it?

"Winning by Design: Creating Effective Contract Campaigns" – This session explored approaches for keeping union membership informed and involved during contract negotiations.

"Government Relations: The Nuts and Bolts of Lobbying" – Several

strategies were presented for connecting with legislators and other groups who can impact issues at the university.

"Small 'p' politics and the Local Association" – This workshop dealt with both systematic and idiosyncratic instances of political issues affecting the university—from pressure not to disturb students' extant comfort zones to the corporatization of higher education, with its emphasis on treating students as "customers."

Attending the AAUP Summer Institute was both educational and fun. I encourage members to contact the UNAC office about the possibility of attending next year's AAUP Summer Institute. Attendance is limited, so it is best to inquire early. In addition to attending informative workshops, it is a great opportunity to meet and socialize with fellow academics from across the country.

Upholding University Contributions to ORP

~ Sarah Josephson

This is an update on the Optional Retirement Program (ORP) lawsuit. The litigation challenges statutory changes in 2007 and 2008 that altered the definition of the "employer contribution" to TRS, and on which the University has relied as justification for drastically reducing its contributions to ORP Tier I members. Article XII, section 7, of the Alaska Constitution provides, "Membership in employee retirement systems of the State or its political subdivisions shall constitute a contractual relationship. Accrued benefits of these systems shall not be diminished or impaired."

On behalf of UNAC and several individual members of ORP Tier I, our lawyers have filed a class action lawsuit in Anchorage superior court to challenge the statutory changes that resulted in diminishment of ORP benefits. It is our principal assertion that the State and University violated Article XII, section 7 of the Alaska Constitution. The case is still in its infancy, so there is little new to report at this time. The following is a summary of the key recent events.

Most significantly, through the discovery process in a related administrative appeal, our lawyers have obtained from the University several documents that support and corroborate our

basic assertions in this case. These documents show that the statutory changes to TRS came about at the express request of the University, and the University's express purpose in making the request was to reduce its ORP costs.

In order to incorporate some of the recently acquired documents, and to focus the case on the core constitutional claim, our attorneys filed an amended complaint in superior court. The Defendants recently moved to dismiss the lawsuit and for summary judgment. Oral argument on the motions is scheduled for May 5.

Twenty Amendments Continued

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addition to the applicable higher co-pay (even if your doctor writes "dispense as written" on the prescription). A medical necessity exception may be requested, if justified. Requiring a valid medical reason for the use of more expensive brand or non-preferred drugs will result in a savings for the plan and all of us.

To help temper overutilization of certain treatments, visits for chiropractic care and physical and massage therapy will be capped at 26 per year, with a recertification option for enrollees who can demonstrate a medical need for additional treatment.

Beginning July 1, newly-hired employees will not immediately be eligible for UA health care, but will have a waiting period of about 30 days. This will allow new employees more time to review plan options and submit their election forms. This change will also help avoid the duplication of effort now occurring when the University

must enroll employees in a default plan before elections are made. Finally, the delay in eligibility deters job applicants from seeking UA employment primarily to obtain immediate healthcare benefits for a current condition.



"The JHCC believes we need a long-term, proactive strategy to control healthcare costs."

Changes will also be instituted regarding eligibility of dependents. An estimated 3% to 8% of all dependents currently covered by our plan may not be eligible. Providing proof of a

dependent's eligibility upon enrollment will become a requirement as of July 1, 2010, for new dependents an employee seeks to have covered by UA's plan. Additionally, beginning next year, employees will need to verify their enrolled dependents' eligibility annually by signing a form. At this time, the JHCC has not recommended that the University conduct a dependent eligibility audit regarding employees' listed dependents.

While only 14% of UA employees chose the Deluxe Plan last year, nearly half of all claims in 2009 that were over \$50,000 were from participants on the Deluxe Plan. The FY11 employee rates for the Deluxe Plan more closely reflect the high costs of this plan.

Prevention and wellness remain the preeminent means of saving cost. Several of Fall River's recommendations focus on increasing employee engagement through the

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wellness plan. Authorizing the Wellness Initiative Network for Alaska (WIN) to share participants Personal Wellness Profile information (formerly called "Health Risk Assessments") with UA's disease management program provider (Accordant) is intended to help identify members who might benefit from these programs. Similarly, expanding the requirements for the \$100 wellness incentive to include a biometric screening that would be available to WIN and Accordant will help ensure that incentive participants are willing to more actively consider next steps toward healthy lifestyles and needed treatment. Implementing recommendations from UA's pharmacy vendor (CVS/Caremark) concerning communication and specialty guideline management programs will help keep members and their healthcare providers educated and motivated

regarding proper use of medication and other treatments.

Fall River has also recommended that UA Choice coordinate a "Value Based Benefit" program to ensure that those with chronic conditions remain compliant with their drug regimens, which benefits the individual as well as the plan. By switching our disease management vendor from Premera/Healthways to Caremark/Accordant, UA's disease management provider will have access to real-time pharmacy data, allowing Accordant to assist employees more promptly. The University will also obtain more favorable pricing from Accordant, as well as better and timelier reporting.

Fall River's recommendations also focus on increased, direct communication with UA Choice participants. Beginning this summer, WIN has been authorized

to conduct additional messaging via mail and email to members with high risk scores in order to help alleviate chronic conditions before they arise. Also, the JHCC intends to establish a monthly healthcare and wellness newsletter to increase awareness regarding life style choices and how we can all be better healthcare consumers. Chancellors, Vice Chancellors, Vice Presidents, Provosts, Deans and Department Heads will emphasize active and open support at the executive level.

For a full explanation of Fall River's 20 recommendations, please visit: <http://www.alaska.edu/benefits/joint-health-care-committ/downloads/Final-Recommendations-from-Fall-River-and-JHCC-12-09-09.pdf>. Information about these changes will also be included in your open enrollment information.

New UA Choice Plan Rates Effective July 1, 2010

	<i>26 Pay Periods Bi-weekly</i>	<i>19 Pay Periods Bi-weekly</i>	<i>FY11 Annual Charge</i>
<i>Deluxe Plan</i>			
Employee Only	\$97.97	\$134.06	\$2,547
Employee + Spouse	\$195.94	\$268.12	\$5,094
Employee + Child(ren)	\$176.32	\$241.28	\$4,584
Employee + Family	\$274.28	\$375.33	\$7,131
<i>Standard Plan</i>			
Employee Only	\$42.93	\$58.74	\$1,116
Employee + Spouse	\$85.86	\$117.48	\$2,232
Employee + Child(ren)	\$77.28	\$105.74	\$2,009
Employee + Family	\$120.20	\$164.48	\$3,125
<i>Economy Plan</i>			
Employee Only	\$15.20	\$20.79	\$395
Employee + Spouse	\$30.40	\$41.58	\$790
Employee + Child(ren)	\$27.36	\$37.43	\$711
Employee + Family	\$42.55	\$58.22	\$1,106

Hard Work Pays Off at UAA

~ John P. Riley

It has been a busy year for many of our active Anchorage members. If I had to summarize UAA's contribution to United Academics in a single sentence, I would emphasize that a number of our members have been working very hard, sometimes with little recognition, to make the University a better place to work and to study.

Mediation

As most of you know, we have been involved in a dispute with our colleagues in UAFT over unit definition. As I write this, we are still involved in mediation efforts to try to resolve our differences. Toby Widdicombe volunteered last January to represent UAA members in mediation discussions in Seattle and will continue to be involved in the process as things move forward this Spring. Toby will also be running in the Boston Marathon. Please wish him luck in both of these efforts when you see him on campus.

Health Care

Our Joint Health Care Committee has been led very effectively for the last couple of years by John O. Riley of Health Sciences. John's term on the committee, which was marked by hard work and great success, has ended and John is now busy with other responsibilities, including his own rapidly growing program here at UAA. Tim Hinterberger, who has long been involved in University health care

discussions, recently agreed to take over as our lead representative. As was the case with John, Tim brings skills and experience to the committee that should serve us well. Many of you know of Tim's connection with the WWAMI Program and his long-standing involvement with health care issues.

Training

UNAC joined representatives of the administration to participate in workload training on UAA campus last January. We have also lent support to the continuing Webinar Series providing



UAA Representative Assembly Meets over Breakfast

training for department chairs. Anyone who serves as a department chair or who someday may be asked to serve should make time to attend one of these events.

Collective Bargaining

Contract talks begin again next Fall. Kate Gordon has agreed to serve as our campus representative on the bargaining team. Kate has also agreed

to play a leading role in our efforts to improve our contract language on intellectual property. Mara Kimmel and Kimberly Pace have agreed to co-chair an ad hoc committee for UAA members who are interested in supporting the negotiation team in the coming round of talks. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with Mara and Kimberly if you would like to be involved.

Solidarity

As an organization, UNAC is interested in promoting solidarity with other labor organizations. At this point, we are in discussions with local Fair Trade advocates in an effort to find ways to support Fair Trade in Alaska. Anyone who would like to volunteer should contact John Riley at afjpr@uaa.alaska.edu or 786-1817.

Grievances

As always, a report on campus activities would be incomplete if it did not mention Pat Cunningham. The work of a good grievance representative is crucial to

the enforcement of the contract, and Pat's work is done with such skill and discretion that he makes it look easy. I think we all know that it is not.

We are lucky at UAA to have so many people who are willing to give their time and energy to work for the members of UNAC. Please take a moment to offer your thanks and encouragement to all of your colleagues who are active in UNAC—and then volunteer to join them!

"Academic Excellence, Faculty Voice" would like to thank all of our contributors who took the time to submit articles for this volume. Look for updates from UAF and UAS in the next issue of your newsletter.

UNITED ACADEMICS' DIRECTORY

President

Carl Shepro

(907) 786-6490

afces1@uaa.alaska.edu

Secretary/Treasurer

Dan Walsh

(907) 474-6746

dewalsh@alaska.edu

UAA Org VP

John P. Riley

University of Alaska Anchorage

afjpr@uaa.alaska.edu

Associate Professor

Sociology Department

University of Alaska Anchorage

Phone: (907) 786-1817

UAF Org VP

Abel Bult-Ito

University of Alaska Fairbanks

abultito@alaska.edu

Professor

Biology and Wildlife Department

University of Alaska Fairbanks

Phone: (907) 474-6482

Acting UAS Org VP

Virginia Mulle

University of Alaska Southeast

ginny.mulle@uas.alaska.edu

Associate Professor

Humanities

University of Alaska Southeast

Phone: (907) 796-6419

UAA Representative Assembly Member (RAM)

Sharon Chamard

afsec@uaa.alaska.edu

Patrick Fort

cpfort@uaa.alaska.edu

Kate Gordon

afkg@uaa.alaska.edu

Robin Hanson

afrhh@uaa.alaska.edu

Timothy Hinterberger

aftjh@uaa.alaska.edu

Greg Protasel

gp@uaa.alaska.edu

Allan Turner

afaat@uaa.alaska.edu

Ian van Tets

afvt@uaa.alaska.edu

Toby Widdicombe

afrtw@uaa.alaska.edu

UAF Representative Assembly Member (RAM)

Melanie Arthur

melanie.arthur@alaska.edu

Richard Carr

rscarr@alaska.edu

Chris Coffman

cecoffman@alaska.edu

Mike Davis

medavis@alaska.edu

John Heaton

jwheaton2@alaska.edu

Sonja Koukel

sdkoukel@alaska.edu

Cecile Lardon

c.lardon@alaska.edu

Gerald McBeath

gamcbeath@alaska.edu

Jenifer McBeath

jhmcbeth@alaska.edu

Debasmita Misra

dmisra@alaska.edu

Terry Reilly

tjreilly@alaska.edu

Richard Seifert

rdseifert@alaska.edu

Joseph Thompson

jcthompson@alaska.edu

Jordan Titus

jjtitus@alaska.edu

UAS Representative Assembly Member (RAM)

Kevin Maier

kevin.maier@uas.alaska.edu

Alexander Simon

alexander.simon@uas.alaska.edu



UNITED ACADEMICS
PO Box 755895
FAIRBANKS, AK 99775-5895