



Negotiations Update: 10/18 and 10/19

Dear United Academics Faculty Members:

We hope you will take the time to read this summary of events from negotiation sessions on Monday, October 18, 2021, and Tuesday, October 19, 2021. Our website, unitedacademics.net, includes an updated list with links to articles we've presented thus far. We are working hard to protect your working conditions!

COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS (raises)

We began this session with a [presentation](#) introducing article 15, which includes our compensation request. We made a strong case for our proposed 3% (or higher) annual COLA increases plus \$1,000 lump payments (also added to base) in our draft of article 15. We have added language to complete the stalled market salary adjustments and bring all salaries up to equitable levels of compensation. We have also proposed raising the minimum starting salary for each rank. Our [article 15 proposal](#) is posted on our website below the presentation.

Throughout the past five years, UNAC has lost over 400 faculty members. UNAC faculty across the system generate approximately 26% of the operating budget (e.g., tuition and fees, external grants, ICR) but cost 16.4%, leaving a 10%, or \$80M, profit to the university. We have seen a 1% raise in the past five years while other Alaska public employee unions have continued to enjoy modest annual raises. Faculty throughout the system deserve COLAs, and we raise enough revenue to cover them. Our proposed annual raises would still leave the UA system with a profit in revenue generated by faculty, and COLAs would likely help stabilize our faculty workforce.

UA ADMINISTRATION SEEKS TO RESTRICT UNAC ACCESS TO NEW HIRES

The UA Administration's team continues to claim that it would be a breach of confidentiality to provide UNAC with a list of faculty new hires. By refusing to add language to the CBA that would require UA HR to provide UNAC with such a list, they continue to make it impossible for UNAC to proactively reach out and welcome new faculty in a timely manner.

Since every faculty member has a right - protected by law - to choose whether or not to belong to UNAC, actions by UA that prevent employees from exercising this right, whether at the recruitment stage, during employment, or by termination of

employment, are unlawful. As such, we will continue to propose that this requirement be added into the CBA. Please be aware that UA faculty who choose not to opt-in to UNAC and as such, do not pay dues, are still bound by the CBA and are fully represented by UNAC as the bargaining unit, per the [NLRA](#).

ADMINISTRATION'S TEAM PUSHES FOR STRICTER PERSONNEL RECORDS RETENTION

The UA Administration's team continues to propose changes that would require all disciplinary material to be retained in personnel files... forever. Language in the current CBA allows the removal of most items after 2 years if the issue has been resolved, which also reflects common retention practices for employee records. While the latest version of their proposal would allow faculty to request - in writing - the removal of such an item from personnel files, we believe that keeping disciplinary material in a file after the issue has been resolved is detrimental to our members' professional futures.

According to the Society for Human Resource Management, "if an employee maintains an acceptable level of behavior for 12 months or more, many employers agree that older disciplinary warnings normally no longer influence future employment decisions." In the spirit of compromise, the UNAC team has counter-proposed that such material may be retained on file for one additional year upon mutual agreement by UNAC and UA.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT REFUSAL

Despite moving testimonies from several faculty members serving on the Alaska Native Studies Council and a poignant and timely Indigenous People's Day message from Interim President Pat Pitney, UA Administration has issued a final refusal to mutually endorse a proposed land acknowledgement. Specifically, UA Administration believes that, since land acknowledgements are a "moral obligation already recognized by the UA system" and not a legally required mandatory subject of bargaining, there is no need to have it be part of the CBA.

UNAC holds the opposing view that this directly pertains to the working conditions of our members, especially our Alaska Native faculty, and is an important step in the right direction to celebrate identity, promote transformation, and honor our differences. We welcome your thoughts and advice on how to elevate this issue.

ENDORSEMENT OF AAUP GUIDING DOCUMENTS

Even as UNAC continues to aggressively pursue the arbitration cases of four tenured professors that were recently non-retained - without just cause - and whose terminations were each egregiously sustained by Interim President Pat Pitney in Step 4 grievances, UA Administration continues to insist that UNAC has misconstrued the intention of our mutual endorsement of tenure and academic freedom. While their latest Article 6 revision has added back the current CBA's "endorsement" of AAUP statements on [Principles of Academic Freedom](#) (1940) and [On Collegiality As a Criterion for Faculty Evaluation](#) (1999), it also includes the following proposed language which would invalidate the endorsements of these principles:

"Nothing in this provision shall be construed to supersede, modify, or affect any other article of the collective bargaining agreement."

In response, UNAC has offered a new counter-proposal that strikes this nullifying qualification and retains the current CBA language endorsing these statements by AAUP. As many may already know, AAUP is one of UNAC's national affiliate associations and is an important national advocate for faculty rights and interests, particularly in the areas of academic freedom, tenure, due process, and shared governance. Through our affiliation, we join AAUP in upholding the fundamental professional values and standards for higher education, advancing the rights of academics, and promoting the interests of higher education teaching, research, creative works, and service.

UNAC'S PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE BENEFITS FOR ALL FULL-TIME FACULTY

Health Care:

- We recognize that our high healthcare expenses are due to excessive costs in Alaska and are not due to any mismanagement of our UA healthcare plans. To help members circumvent these high costs, we propose moving the UA contribution from 82% to 85%.

Retirement:

- We are suggesting that the UA's retirement contribution wage-base for the UA Pension Plan match the wage-base used by employers who contribute to Social Security.
- We have included a voluntary early retirement incentive program.

Holidays:

- We are seeking to add Indigenous Peoples' Day as an additional paid holiday.

Parental Leave:

- We are adding language allowing the use of the UNAC Leave Bank (formerly UAFT Leave Bank) for paid parental leave.

Pay Distribution:

- Similar to other institutions of higher education, we have proposed giving faculty the option of being paid for a 9-month contract over the course of a 12-month period.

UA ADMINISTRATION DECIDES NOT TO ILLEGALLY DISCRIMINATE FOR UNION ACTIVITY

The administration's team has conceded that elected UNAC leaders maintain the right to participate in shared governance, provided they avoid 'conflicts of interests.' United Academics is uncertain where the conflicts lie, but we are confident that all of our members act professionally and recuse themselves from participation in a committee, discussion, or event when they have a conflict of interest. We are pleased to see that the administration's team has dropped their illegal proposal to prevent UNAC leaders from taking part in shared governance.

UA Administration has finally dropped their illegal proposal intended to prevent UNAC leaders from participating in shared governance. On the flip side and without any concrete examples to reference, they also felt compelled to evaluate faculty senate governing documents for conflicts of interest. Their concerns remain unclear and this item remains open to (confusing) discussion.

MANAGEMENT RIGHTS NOW INCLUDE TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENT

The UNAC team reached a [tentative agreement on Article 18](#) on October 19, 2021. This version adds the management 'right' to provide faculty with the technology necessary to perform our jobs.

WHERE THINGS STAND

- Articles on the United Academics side: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
- Articles on the UA administration side: 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17.
- TA'd articles: 8, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.
- Articles not presented yet: 10 (Reduction in Force Due to Discontinuance or Reduction of Program) & 11 (Disciplinary Action)

NEXT BARGAINING ZOOM SESSIONS (9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

- Monday, October 25 and Tuesday, October 26
- Monday, November 1 and Tuesday, November 2
- Monday, November 8 and Tuesday, November 9
- Monday, November 15 and Tuesday, November 16
- Monday, November 29 and Tuesday, November 30
- Monday, December 6 and Tuesday, December 7

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all of our members for the work you do each day. Thank you for attending negotiation sessions when you're able to do so. Thank you to the three Faculty Senates for your recently passed motions supporting the UNAC team. We hope all of you, individually or collectively with your department/program or college, will communicate your thoughts with United Academics' negotiations team and leadership (contacts below), and consider collective actions to support our negotiations.

In solidarity,
Your United Academics Negotiations Team

UNAC CONTACTS

Lead Negotiator - [Tony Rickard](#), Ph.D. UAF
tony.rickard@unac4996ak.com

President - [Abel Bult-ito](#), Ph.D. UAF
abel.bult.ito@unac4996ak.com

Treasurer - [Nelta Edwards](#), Ph.D. UAA
nelta.edwards@unac4996ak.com

Secretary - [Charla Brown](#), Ph.D. UAS
charla.brown@unac4996ak.com

UAA Organizational VP - [Tara Palmer](#)
tara.palmer@unac4996ak.com

UAS Organizational VP - [Lisa Hoferkamp](#), Ph.D.
lisa.hoferkamp@unac4996ak.com

UAF Organizational VP - [Mara Bacsujlaky](#)
mara.bacsujlaky@unac4996ak.com

Extended Sites Organizational VP - [Rick McDonald](#)
rick.mcdonald@unac4996ak.com

Contract Manager - [Melanie Arthur](#), Ph.D.

melanie.arthur@unac4996ak.com

Assistant Contract Manager - [Kate Quick](#), MFA
kate.quick@unac4996ak.com

United Academics Local #4996 (UNAC) is the bargaining unit that represents all non-adjunct, full-time faculty at the University of Alaska. UNAC is an affiliate of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

[Visit our Website](#)

United Academics AAUP/AFT | P.O. Box 755895, Fairbanks, AK 99775-5895

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