



Negotiations Update: 11/15 and 11/16

To United Academics Bargaining Unit Members:

We've wrapped up another week of negotiations. Please read this update to stay informed. Our biggest challenge right now is that the Administration's team is not responding to our proposals, and we need your help. See below for suggestions.

MEMBER ACTIONS TO HELP YOUR NEGOTIATIONS TEAM

Write to [Interim-President Pitney](#) and the [Board of Regents](#) about negotiations. If you've attended sessions and been pleased or alarmed about something, they need to know about it. Here are some specific items you could write to them about:

- The importance of shared governance
- The effects of only having one 1% raise in the past five years
- The benefits of multi-year contracts for non-tenure track faculty
- The inclusion of a land acknowledgement in our CBA Article 1

Write to them - and other administrators - individually and as part of a group of colleagues. Last month, Faculty Alliance sent a [letter](#) to Interim-President Pitney to emphasize the importance of shared governance and tenure, and the UAA Consortium Library faculty did the same with [this letter in support of shared governance](#). THANK YOU to both groups. Their letters are great models for other programs, departments, groups, or committees to follow.

Write to your locally elected officials and [state legislators](#) about the important work being done in your particular area of the UA system. Tell them that we've been cut too much and need their support to prevent further damage to the important work we are all trying to do for our students, our communities, and our state.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

MULTI-YEAR CONTRACTS FOR NON-TENURE TRACK

FACULTY

On Tuesday, the UNAC team welcomed written and oral statements from 15 non-tenure track faculty members about the benefit of multi-year contracts to their work and to the universities, and the hardships endured by continual 9 month contracts. Their words were a powerful reminder of the tenuous working conditions that 30% of our members experience, and that could be alleviated by the implementation of multi-year contracts.

THANK YOU to the faculty members who provided written and oral testimony; it was powerful. Here are a few excerpts from written testimony we received and read out loud:

FACULTY STATEMENTS ABOUT MULTI-YEAR CONTRACTS:

“Maybe the university likes the fact that a term can be there for a student’s first semester, but doesn’t have the job security to imagine being there for the student’s graduation.”

“A multi-year contract would alleviate the concern of future funding and help me become more involved in long-term commitments such as serving on grad student committees or other advisory committees at the university level.”

“If this rapidly-shrinking institution ever wants to put itself on solid footing for growth, it must have stability and quality in its faculty. It will have neither if it does not show as much commitment to faculty as it expects from them. Multi-year contracts are a step in the right direction.”

“Longer multiyear contracts would also align better with multiyear awards (2-5 years) from NIH, NSF, NOAA, etc. It is hard to plan for the future and build up a lab or team when you are not sure of your job for the coming year. Multiyear contracts for those who have a proven track record would provide confidence, boost morale, and allow creative and hard working people to succeed and help UA shine.”

“Having that security of a multi-year contract allowed me to focus on the important work I do in my classrooms, projects I engage in with other faculty, and serving on committees. Non-tenure track faculty need multi-year contracts to have continuity and consistency in their work, as our collective labor provides the building blocks for the university. Being under the cloud of chronic stress each year, wondering if the contract will be renewed, is not healthy for faculty, the university, or for students.”

“UAA has lost some talented, ambitious, and excellent instructors who were eventually exhausted by their lack of job security...Extending contracts for non-tenure track faculty would begin to create real equity among faculty who serve different roles.”

“I’m VERY concerned we will have trouble replacing my position without tools like multi-year contracts. And without longer-term security, how will new faculty effectively network in their communities and regions? Develop collaborative partnerships to seek funding for education, training, workforce development and research? They may be constantly looking for a more secure position - I know I would if I was younger and looking to start a new, more stable phase of life.”

Multi-year contracts was part of our [Article 9 counter-proposal](#). The other substantive changes in our proposal are, in brief: :

- Make Student Teaching Evaluations optional in promotion files
- Change Annual Activities Reports to only include an updated CV and a personal narrative
- Stop requiring external review letters for promotions for all faculty (MAU and unit criteria may still require them if they choose to)
- Increase the amount of notice required to be given to non-retained, non-tenure track faculty

The UA management team has rejected these changes once, but we have provided further testimony, evidence, and discussion in our counter proposal that included these items again. We also overhauled the organization and reduced repetition in this important article. The UA management team rejected those improvements initially, but we have proposed them in our counter for their further consideration. These are great items to write to the [Interim-President Pitney](#) and the [BOR](#) about.

The UA management team has proposed only two substantive changes to Article 9:

- Change the composition of the peer review committee from 5 tenured faculty to 5 faculty (4 at UAS), with 3 of them (2 at UAS) at rank of full professor
- Close peer review committee discussions with no option for an open meeting
- Require an additional review one year after an unsuccessful post-tenure review, with required disciplinary action up to termination after a second unsuccessful post-tenure review.

The UNAC negotiation team noted that their proposal to reduce the number of tenured faculty serving on peer review committees is among the indicators of the need for more tenure-track faculty members at all three universities. If, as a solution, non-tenure track faculty members will be more frequently tapped for this type of service work, that should come with increased job protections, which they are rejecting.

Further, the peer review process in Article 9 is meant to be formative, not disciplinary. The UNAC negotiations team is committed to keeping those processes, and articles, distinct as they serve different purposes for the universities and our members.

THE ADMINISTRATION HAD QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR COMPENSATION PROPOSAL

The Administration's team asked a few questions about our [Article 15: Compensation](#) proposal from October 18, such as why we need minimum salaries outlined in the CBA, and why we're asking for 3% minimum annual raises and market adjustments to base salaries. We explained how the two approaches benefit members at different salary levels differently, so both are needed for an equitable system of annual raises. We continue to wait for their counter-proposal to Article 15. Meanwhile, these are great topics for writing to the [BOR](#) and [Interim-President Pitney](#).

THEY WON'T ACCEPT LEGALLY BINDING CBA REVISIONS

The Administration's lead negotiator started out the afternoon on Monday by joking, "We do have one (article counter-proposal) - don't get excited - we do have one" before presenting their newest version of Article 3, which was identical to their previous counter proposal. It's the only item they presented on Monday.

The Administration's team ignored the fact that parts of the existing language of this article were rendered obsolete by the 2018 unit definition decision by the Alaska Labor Relations Agency (ALRA) following the merger of UAFT and UNAC. The [ALRA decision](#) (p. 8) states that postdocs and visiting professors are in the UNAC bargaining unit. Bargaining unit membership definitions is a permissive subject of bargaining, not a required subject. We have repeatedly indicated to the UA management team that we do not intend to bargain members out of our unit. They keep attempting to negotiate postdocs and visiting professors out of our union in their first years of service. We returned [Article 3](#) to them on Tuesday with postdocs and visiting professors included in our unit and stated that we choose not to bargain unit membership.

UNAC TEAM CONCEDED TO KEEP THE COMPLAINT PROCESS IN THE CBA; THEIR TEAM REJECTED OUR REVISIONS TO THE PROCESS

In [Article 7](#), we initially proposed getting rid of our complaint process to put everything through the grievance process instead, but the Administration's team rejected that idea twice. Next, we agreed to maintain the complaint process with the added provision that all subjects of complaints be eligible for review by an Appeals Board before the provost made the final decision. Management's team rejected that proposal Tuesday morning based on the premise that provosts are the chief academic officers and should have the final say on issues of substantive academic judgement except for promotion and tenure.

Responding to this concern, we countered Tuesday afternoon with a process that includes an appeals board and maintains the provost as the final say on issues of substantive academic judgement that are not promotion or tenure decisions. We shall see if our attempt at a compromise gets Article 7 to a tentative agreement.

NEXT SESSIONS

- Monday, November 28 and Tuesday, November 29
- Monday, December 6 and Tuesday, December 7
- Monday, January 18 and Tuesday, January 19
- Monday, January 24 and Tuesday, January 25
- Monday, February 7 and Tuesday, February 8

STATUS OF CBA ARTICLES

UNAC needs to respond to:
Article 1 Agreement and Duration

This is the article that includes

UA needs to respond to:
[Article 2](#) Purpose
[Article 3](#) Recognition
[Article 4](#) Membership and Voluntary Dues Deduction

a land acknowledgement.

They've said they won't negotiate further on including it, but you could write to the [BOR](#) and [Interim-President Pitney](#) to encourage their team to reconsider their refusal to include a land acknowledgement in the CBA.

**We can't provide links to the UA Administration team's proposals due to a confidentiality clause they've included on their drafts.*

- [Article 5](#) United Academics Representatives and Privileges, Release Time
- [Article 6](#) Academic Freedom and Responsibility
- [Article 7](#) Resolution of Disputes
- [Article 9](#) Faculty Status: Appointment, Evaluation, Promotion, Tenure, and Termination
- [Article 12](#) Personnel Files
- [Article 13](#) Workload
- [Article 15](#) Compensation
- [Article 16](#) Personnel Benefits
- [Article 17](#) Working Conditions

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[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).

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