



Negotiations Update: 12/06 and 12/07

To United Academics Bargaining Unit Members:

We've wrapped up the fall semester of negotiations but we are nowhere close to finishing. In fact, we are further from done than we were at this point in the 2016 negotiations. In the spring, we will be asking for your help to move things along. Special thanks to the non-tenure track faculty at UAF who put [wrote a letter](#), complete with dozens of signatures, to Interim-President Pitney and the UA negotiations team, regarding multi-year contracts for non-tenure track faculty.

Thanks again to those of you who have individually and collectively written letters to Interim President Pitney, the UA Negotiations Team, and/or the BOR, and thanks to those of you who are using our UNAC logo for your Zoom profile picture. In our December newsletter, we will include our Zoom profile picture plus instructions for changing your profile, and we'll include other advocacy ideas as well.

Please read below for a summary of what happened this week at negotiations.

Summary of Events

Counting our Changes

The Administration's Negotiation Team stated that UNAC's Negotiation Team has made over 100 proposed changes to the CBA. We feel confident that all of our proposed changes would benefit our members. Many would benefit the administration too. We do not agree that our proposed changes are as numerous as the Administration's Team has asserted, so we asked for clarity about how they came to this number. They explained that they counted a change as substantive if it would be grievable, and that each part of a proposed change that could be grieved separately was counted as one change.

The Administration's Team appears to be viewing the CBA through the lens of liability, which is a dark lens to use. The CBA should be a shared commitment to accomplishing the missions of the universities and should ensure that processes are followed and everyone is treated fairly. Our CBA should benefit both faculty and administrators.

Sampling of Items That Will Specifically Benefit Our Members *and* University Administrators:

- [Better job protections specifically for non-tenure track faculty](#)
- Multi-year contracts

- Higher instructor starting salaries
- Longer non-retention notice required
- [Improved, competitive compensation package for faculty](#)
- [Improved, competitive benefits package](#)
- [Streamlined annual review/report process and modified comprehensive review file requirements](#)
- [Training on progressive discipline for administrators](#)
- [Inclusion of the seven tenets of just cause](#)
- [Timely notification to UNAC of new hires, and notification to new and potential hires regarding the position's represented status](#)

Member Priorities Awaiting Response from the Administration's

Team:

- [Compensation package](#)
- [Benefits package](#)
- [Multi-year contracts for non-tenure track faculty](#)(9.1.3, page 2)
- [longer non-retention notice time for non-tenure track faculty](#)(9.4.2, page 21)
- [Streamlining Contents of Annual Activities Reports/Reviews and Comprehensive Reviews](#) (9.2.1 page 4; 9.2.2.1, page 5)
- Protection of academic freedom and tenure: [article 6](#) (Endorsement of AAUP documents); [Article 9](#) (tenure and review processes)

We await counter-proposals from the Administration's Team so we can move closer to agreement on a contract you all deserve.

Including A Land Acknowledgement Could Lead to Grievances

As an example of one of our 100+ proposed changes, the Administration's Negotiation Team counted the land acknowledgement as three changes that would open them up to three new potential grievances. This is the most substantive rationale that they have offered thus far on rejecting the land acknowledgement, and reinforces that their primary concern is liability. Here is the proposed wording of the Land Acknowledgement:

The University and United Academics jointly acknowledge that we live and work on Indigenous lands. We agree that our shared missions involve promoting and enhancing the knowledge of and respect for Alaska Native peoples and their status as federally-recognized, sovereign tribes. We recognize the responsibility of our institutions to include Alaska Native peoples in all domains of university work. We commit to cooperating with all members of the University of Alaska community to end systemic and institutional racism.

Inclusion of the Seven Tenets of Just Cause Could Lead to Grievances

In the UA Team's counter-proposal this week, they rejected our proposal to include the [seven tenets of just cause](#) in [Article 11](#) to help specify the disciplinary process. In previous sessions, the Administration's Team said the seven tenets of just cause are implied in the contract so explicit inclusion was unnecessary, and *of course* they always follow the seven tenets of just cause in disciplinary processes.

This time, the UA Team said they couldn't include the seven tenets of just cause in Article 11 because it could lead to seven different types of grievances. They want to avoid language that can lead to any type of grievance. We included the seven tenets in our proposal *with the intention* of decreasing the number of grievances by ensuring that all supervisors and faculty members have a clear understanding of disciplinary expectations. We also proposed required training in progressive discipline procedures for supervisors to help reduce needless process errors that expend time and energy for everyone involved, but this was also rejected in the University's latest counter-proposal.

Package Deal Goes Back and Forth

Last week, we traded a package of Articles 4, 5, and 7 from them to us, back to them, back to us this Monday, and back to them on Tuesday.

The main sticking point has been the 'Sunset Clause,' which states that the University will stop deducting dues with the end of each CBA. They have never done this in practice, despite its presence in previous CBAs, but had earlier threatened to enact the sunset clause this December 31. Both teams' current versions of [Article 4](#) do not contain the sunset clause, and instead contain language stating that each member will remain a member until they no longer work for the UA system or they submit a dues revocation form. We also insist on including language that specifies that all new forms will be processed in a timely fashion in order to avoid a recurrence of recent delays in the processing of new forms.

We are now close to reaching agreement on the Articles 4/5/7 package and had hoped that we might Tentatively Agree (TA) to the package on Tuesday, but that did not happen. The package of [Article 4](#), [Article 5](#), and [Article 7](#) remains on the Administration Team's side of the table.

United Academics Leadership Priorities Continue to Guide Our Negotiation Team

The following [Commitment to Excellence](#) with four guiding tenets was re-endorsed by the UNAC Representative Assembly on 30 October 2021.

United Academics is committed to excellence in higher education, and our Representative Assembly members strive to set a positive example by demonstrating the following behaviors:

Honor Our Differences:

- Maintain the highest standards of reliability, accountability, ethics, and integrity.
- Engage in direct communication, academic debate, and the pursuit of knowledge to create an environment of free and honest inquiry; reference meeting statement below.
- Facilitate awareness and dialogue to elevate the perspectives of others, particularly those of historically marginalized and racialized groups.
- Dedicate Representative Assembly resources to antiracism, anticolonialism, and antidiscrimination efforts.

Prioritize the Academic Mission:

- Be familiar with all UNAC governing documents and promote full compliance.
- Communicate with represented UNAC members regularly.
- Represent UNAC in shared governance activities (e.g., faculty senate, etc).
- Utilize best practices and resources from AAUP/AFT for self and colleagues.
- Dedicate Representative Assembly resources to our collective bargaining initiatives.

Educate for the Common Good:

- Embrace the unique democratizing role of higher education within society, and our union.
- Promote education as a public good rather than a for-profit enterprise.
- Recognize the positive impact our members' endeavors have on the quality of life in Alaska.
- Embrace a willingness to live and work in a just and sustainable manner.
- Promote the welfare of our society and the well-being of our planet.
- Dedicate Representative Assembly resources to legislative action.

Build the Future:

- Embrace democratic principles in the governance of academic affairs and the accompanying responsibility that comes with that to include actively engaging in shared governance service.
- Propose solutions and make decisions based on factual, established, and vetted criteria.

- Capitalize on personal strengths, disciplinary knowledge, and a robust professional network to enhance the reputation of the university and benefit students and junior colleagues.
- Partner with our local communities to share resources and make productive connections.
- Dedicate Representative Assembly resources to building and organizing our membership.

Our Negotiation Team's priorities are guided by these principles as well as by member feedback.

Status Of CBA Articles

For a full run-down of our progress during the fall semester, please visit www.unitedacademics.net

Our website's homepage includes negotiation-related presentations to-date as well as links to all of our proposals and all of the Tentatively Agreed (TA'd) articles.

UNAC needs to respond to:

Article 1 Agreement and Duration

This is the article that includes a land acknowledgement. They've said they won't negotiate further on including it in the CBA, 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.

Article 11: Disciplinary Action

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

UA needs to respond to:

[Article 2:](#) Purpose

[Article 3:](#) Recognition

[Article 4:](#) Membership, Dues Deduction, and Agency Fee

[Article 5:](#) United Academics Representatives and Privileges, Release Time

[Article 6:](#) Academic Freedom and Responsibility

[Article 9:](#) Faculty Status: Appointment, Evaluation, Promotion, Tenure, and Termination

[Article 13:](#) Workload

[Article 15:](#) Compensation

[Article 16:](#) Personnel Benefits

[Article 17:](#) Working Conditions

NEXT BARGAINING SESSIONS

- Monday, December 6 and Tuesday, December 7
- Tuesday, January 18 and Wednesday, January 19
- Monday, January 24 and Tuesday, January 25
- Monday, February 7 and Tuesday, February 8
- Monday, February 21 and Tuesday, February 22

Thank you for all you do for the University of Alaska system, and thank you for staying informed and supporting your CBA negotiations. We hope to see you in the Zoom audience in January. Stay tuned for exciting new Zoom backgrounds and social media profiles.

Enjoy your winter break!

In Solidarity,
Your United Academics Negotiation Team

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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).

[Visit our Website](#)

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