



UNAC Connection - October 2021

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UA's New Remote Work Policy Does Not Apply to Faculty

We have all received multiple recent emails about requirements for signed remote work agreements. These emails are not intended for faculty, as we currently have an MOA in place allowing for remote work without individual agreements, with the exception of faculty living out of state. Even in non-pandemic times, much of our work can be performed remotely. We have been assured that faculty living in-state will not be included in any future communications regarding remote work policies.

Ongoing Discussion of a Possible Covid-19 Vaccination Mandate at UA

In August, the UNAC Representative Assembly passed a motion in support of a system-wide vaccine mandate for all in-person activities, which was shared with UA Administrators. While we have seen some movement since then toward a vaccination mandate at UAF, implementation system-wide will likely require buy-in from faculty, staff, and student governance groups at UAA and UAS, barring a clear federal mandate. UNAC will continue to support a system-wide mandate, and we also support the proposed UAF mandate as a path to system-wide implementation.

Given that outreach from shared governance groups will serve to reinforce the importance of having a vaccination mandate, please consider taking the following actions:

- Consider talking to your Staff Council and Faculty Senate colleagues, as well as student governance leaders, about whether their groups will discuss a resolution or motion endorsing a vaccine mandate for in-person activities.
- Your departments and programs could also vote on motions supporting a vaccine mandate, directed at your chancellor and Interim President Pitney.
- As the final decision rests with Interim President Pitney, please consider communicating your opinion to her about requiring a vaccination mandate at your location.

Live Negotiations... Better than the Super Bowl!

Mark your calendars for these upcoming negotiation sessions (9am-5pm):

- Monday, October 18 and Tuesday, October 19 on Zoom
- Monday, October 25 and Tuesday, October 26 on Zoom
- Monday, November 1 and Tuesday, November 2 on Zoom
- Monday, November 8 and Tuesday, November 9 on Zoom
- Monday, November 16 and Tuesday, November 17 on Zoom

We're into our second month of CBA negotiations. After each session, we send an email update summarizing events. The last update was sent on October 7, 2021; please check your inbox, promotions tab, and junk folder if you didn't receive it. We hope you will take the time to read each of our updates as we send them. We welcome your **feedback**, and we also encourage you to communicate your opinions with your colleagues, deans/directors, provosts, chancellors, and Interim President Pitney.

Our next two-day bargaining session will be Monday, October 18 and Tuesday, October 19 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. AKT with intermittent breaks throughout the day and lunch from 12:00pm-1:00pm AKT. We are attempting to keep our website www.unitedacademics.net updated with the current status of negotiations on days when we are in session. We are also keeping our website updated with current UNAC article proposals and counter-proposals. Please read through those if you want a closer look at what we're bargaining for.

We will continue to send the Zoom link each morning when we are negotiating. Thanks to the 100+ people who have attended so far! Please attend when possible to stay informed and to show both negotiation teams that you care about your future working conditions.

Anonymous Faculty Member's Comments Regarding Negotiations To-Date:

The tenure process must be protected. Faculty are being saddled with all sorts of new tasks and requests from administrators, and there are fewer staff to provide needed support. On top of this, we are constantly trying to promote our university and our work to our stakeholders, all while trying to excel at our official jobs as faculty members.

Perhaps the saddest part of this for me is that I don't plan to leave for another couple of decades. For faculty who are invested for the long term, we will watch UA eat itself and continue to engage in irrational short-term planning - and just keep teaching, researching, and serving. That is, until they decide to take away my department too, in an end-run to fire more people.

I'm not sure anyone at UA is listening to our faculty union, but hopefully someone in administration will eventually start to actually care. In any case, thanks for working

THANK YOU to the faculty at UAA's Consortium Library for collectively signing a letter addressed to Chancellor Parnell, Interim President Pitney, and the UA negotiations team in support of keeping the endorsement of AAUP's '1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure' in our CBA. [Their letter](#) is now posted on our website, with their permission. We hope you will use this as an example of what you could do collectively within your department, program, or college to support our ongoing negotiations.

Faculty Spotlight

Jill Dumesnil, Professor of Mathematics, UAS, Juneau



"My husband has been battling cancer. While I've found the health plan to be sufficient, the HR procedures for taking FMLA leave have been cumbersome. Federal law provides that an employer may require physician certification for FMLA leave to care for an ill family member. That UA has chosen to require the documentation, with recertification every 6 months, is an unnecessary burden on grieving, stressed, yet conscientious employees. After contacting the UNAC office and President Bult-Ito, my leave was approved with a one-year extension within four days. UNAC works for me!"

We want to hear your story, too! Email our assistant contract manager, [Kate Quick](#), to share a story of how the union has helped you. We'd also like to hear and share stories of your achievements in future newsletters, so pass those along to Kate Quick, too.

What Dues Do for You

While all full-time faculty across UA are members of our collective bargaining unit, we truly appreciate our members that opt-in to pay union dues. A few key points to note:

- Dues are only 1.05% of your salary, paid through biweekly payroll deductions.
- Your dues-paying status sends a strong signal to the UA Administration that faculty care about working conditions and that we stand united across the state.
- In addition to covering union operational costs, dues are also used to cover costly arbitration fees related to CBA disputes.
- If you aren't currently an active member, here is the membership [form](#). Contact your Vice President or our union staff if you're not sure whether you're paying dues. (contact info below)

UNAC is currently pursuing several arbitration cases involving multiple tenured professors that have been non-retained at all three institutions. By protecting

academic freedom and tenure, we also protect our non-tenure track faculty members by providing safe and professional working environments which value diverse opinions and long term, full time employment for everyone. Your dues are more important than ever before!

Meeting Reminders

UNAC General Membership Meetings

November 2, 2021 (Tuesday)

5:30-7:00 p.m. AKT

- *General Membership meetings will be held the first Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 via Zoom.*
- *After this semester, we will hold meetings the 1st Tuesday and 2nd Wednesday of each month.*
- *The Executive Board has decided to open these meetings to all members rather than only dues paying members.*
- *A separate email with meeting information will be sent to all members.*

Next UNAC Representative Assembly Meeting

October 30 (Sat) 10:00am 2:00pm AKT via Zoom

UNAC Executive Board Meetings

Second and Fourth Wednesdays of each month

9:30-11:30

Dues paying members are welcome to observe the RA and Executive Board meetings. Contact the [union office](#) for the Zoom link.

Executive Board and Staff Contact

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United Academics Local #4996 (UNAC) is the bargaining unit that represents all 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 www.unitedacademics.net

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