



## UNAC Connection - April 2022

### **In this issue:**

#### **Honor our differences**

- Shared Governance is a Democracy
- Protecting Free Speech and Academic Freedom

#### **Prioritize the Academic Mission**

- Guidance When Transferring Units
- Promotion and/or Tenure

#### **Educate for the common good**

- Students Bore the Brunt of Budget Cuts
- Faculty Spotlights

#### **Build the future**

- Fair and Competitive Contract Now
- Pension Contribution Improvements
- Motions Passed by RA
- Member Actions
- Reminders (*FTO & grade deadlines, student loan forgiveness, bargaining dates*)



## Honor Our Differences

### Shared Governance is Democracy

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, along with other trends inside of democratic nations, has shaken the surety of democracy's future. This seems like a good time to point out that shared governance is democracy. Universities are meant to be bastions of democracy in the communities that they serve. Unlike businesses, which often run in a top-down management style where executives make decisions and those lower in the institutional hierarchy carry them out, shared governance relies on democratic decision-making with various constituencies having differing levels of responsibility for different functions of the university.

Some individuals in leadership positions may bemoan the fact that democracy is

always time-consuming and messy and prefer instead to issue decrees without fully vetting ideas; however, this practice is antithetical to shared governance and to democracy itself. It is time for those of us who believe in the principle of democracy to double down on efforts to strengthen it, including insisting on shared governance within the University of Alaska.

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## UNAC Protects Faculty and Free Speech

Dues are being used to pay legal fees and to fund negotiations. University leadership has caused a lot of unnecessary spending for both UNAC and UA. When UNAC has to spend time and money fighting off tenure and freedom of speech questions, it illustrates a lack of effective leadership at UA as well as a lack of respect for and commitment to the important work faculty do.



UNAC is a buffer protecting faculty rights during this era of austerity and poor management decisions. Thank you to our dues payers for making it possible for UNAC to fight these attacks on faculty, and to bargain for job security improvements for all faculty.

## Prioritize the Academic Mission

### Notifying Supervisors of Intent to Stand for Promotion and/or Tenure

If you plan to stand for promotion and/or tenure next year, time is running out to notify your supervisor. The final day of this year's contract is May 7, 2022, but that's a Saturday. Make sure you notify your supervisor of your intention to stand for promotion and/or tenure by Friday, May 6, 2022.

**To our non-tenure track (formerly known as term) faculty**, you can also stand for promotion after 5 years at current rank. This includes non-tenure track faculty at the following ranks: instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and any of the previous ranks with descriptors such as 'clinical,' or 'research.'

The processes for promotion of non-tenure track and tenure track faculty are both laid out in Article 9 of our [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#). Make time over the summer to assemble your file; you will thank yourself in August when it's already finished or nearly assembled. Contact your UNAC Org VP if you have questions about the process or your eligibility (contacts below).

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### No Termination or Resignation to Transfer from Unit to Unit

Do not resign or accept termination in order to transfer positions. We have a long-



**Dr. Charla Brown, Associate Professor  
Human Resource Management, UAS;  
United Academics Secretary**



*“UA has proven to be behind the Lower 48 by literally decades in terms of having a strategic approach to human resource management. Genuinely embracing AAUP principles related to shared governance would be a significant first step in aligning the academic interests of faculty with the operations of the university.”*

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**Mara Bacsujlaky, Assistant Professor (non-tenure track)  
UAF Cooperative Extension;  
United Academics Organizational Vice President for UAF**



*“My most discouraging moment in my employment at UAF came when I realized that the BOR granted former President Jim Johnsen a parting gift of \$300,000 (or thereabouts) ...an amount that has taken me nearly 15 years of continuous employment to collect in my UAF pension fund and an amount that I will have to try and make last for however long I live past retirement. And yet still UAF Management is continuing to fight against raising their current retirement contribution cap of \$42,000, when the national (**social security employer contribution**) cap is \$147,000.”*

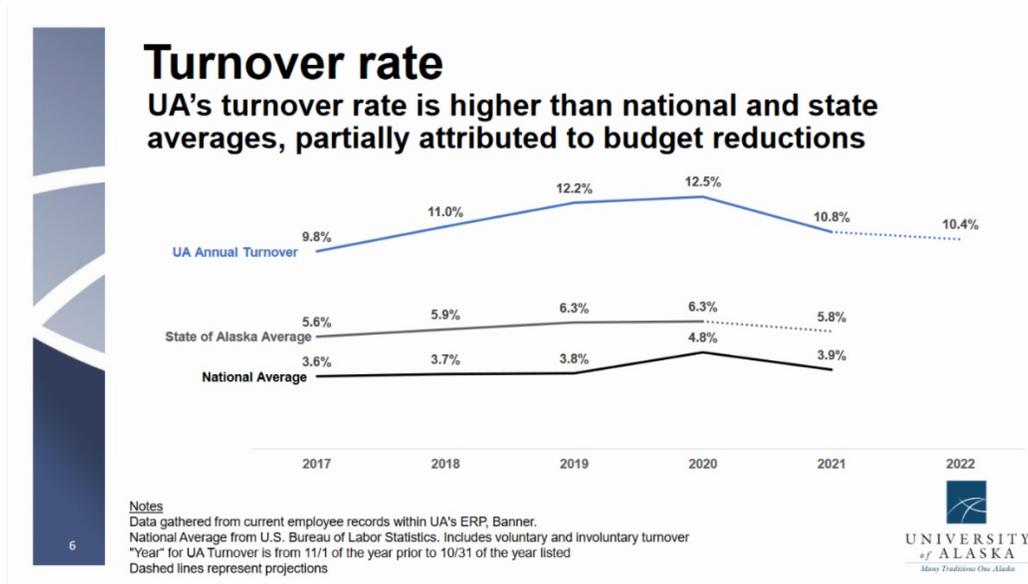
# Build for the Future

## Faculty Need a Fair and Competitive Contract

Faculty are paying attention to bargaining and, from what we hear, most of you are upset about current working conditions. If faculty don't see more commitment, respect, and investment, they will continue to leave for better pastures and more programs will be at risk of losing accreditation.

We want faculty to want to stay here, offering your expertise to the greater good of Alaska and beyond. The future health and prosperity of Alaska depends on a flourishing University of Alaska system, and faculty are essential to the system's very existence.

Without a robust faculty body and their programs, fewer students will enroll in UA classes. Alaska's economy will suffer as a result. The administration knows turnover is a problem, as evidenced from the slide below, which was part of a presentation to the BOR at their February 24, 2022, meeting. The question is what they're willing to do to fix the problem.



From UA Board of Regents' 2/24/2022 slides "[Compensation Discussion](#)" (slide 6)

**Faculty working conditions  
are student learning conditions**

**Fighting for Pension Contribution  
Improvements**

UA decided many years ago to provide a pension to their employees instead of participating the Social Security System. Currently, UA makes contributions to our pensions based on only the employees' first \$42,000 in annual earnings; however, if we paid into the social security system instead of the pension program, UA would be required to make contributions on the first \$147,000 in earnings. This is a big leap; it's also essential to the well-being of UA workers after retirement, and it would very likely help lower UA's unsustainably high 10.4% turnover rate.

In the Alaska legislature, [HB 220](#) is attempting to make a similar change for all public employees, including UA faculty. In February, the UNAC Representative Assembly passed a resolution in support of HB 220. We encourage you to contact your own [legislators](#) in support of this bill.

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## Motions/Statements Passed at the April Representative Assembly Meeting

### 1) Wellness Program

The RA discussed the preponderance of evidence that wellness programs do not produce their intended results. The wellness program is a cost borne by all those on the UA health insurance plan, but it does not benefit all members equitably. In order to advise the UNAC representatives on the Joint Healthcare Committee, the UNAC Representative Assembly passed the following motion:

- *“UNAC does not support the continued use of the wellness program as a method to promote wellness.”*

We realize members have different feelings on this subject. Please feel free to contact your union leadership listed below if you have further questions. We are including the following links for any interested members, as well.

<https://hbr.org/2019/08/what-wellness-programs-dont-do-for-workers>

<https://www.nber.org/papers/w24229>

### 2) Out-of-State Workers

The number of fully out-of-state workers appears to be growing across the UA System and has been noticed by some legislators. Although “Alaska hire” is not a legally defensible concept, it is near and dear to the hearts of Alaskans. Alaskans ought to be filling jobs in Alaska, particularly public employees like those who work at the University of Alaska.

In addition to the economic arguments about keeping money in the Alaska economy, public employees also need to be committed to the future of Alaska and it is unlikely that they are if they are permanently making their lives elsewhere. While everyone recognizes that UA employees need to have the leeway to travel outside of Alaska, sometimes for extended periods of time for work or to attend to personal matters (like caring for family members), in general, UA employees need to reside in Alaska. The UNAC Representative Assembly passed the following motion:

- *“United Academics believes that university employees should live and work in the state of Alaska. United Academics also recognizes that faculty and many other employees have historically performed a substantial amount of their work at home or outside university facilities and that life circumstances may necessitate temporarily working from out-of-state for some employees. Only in*

*cases that are exceptional, rare and time-limited should university employees live outside the state of Alaska."*

Adjunct assignments, FML, and sabbaticals are all examples of exceptional and time-limited circumstances where out-of-state work is necessary. Additionally, there may be rare circumstances in which an employee must live permanently outside Alaska.

## Reminders

### Faculty Time Off (FTO) Cash-In Deadline

If you've claimed at least five days of [FTO](#), including the required three days over holiday closure, don't forget that you can cash out five days for payment in lieu of taking time off.

[Fill this form out](#) as soon as possible if you haven't already; faculty have to be on contract in order to be eligible for this benefit. FTO does not build up year to year. For those of you on alternate AY assignments, contact your Org VP with questions about FTO.

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### Grade Deadlines Matter

Turn in your grades on time. Grades are due by noon on May 4, 2022. Check with your department chair/program head/coordinator, supervisor, or registrar if you are unsure how to submit grades.

There are serious, negative implications for students when grades are not submitted by the deadline, including their eligibility for continued financial aid, continued eligibility for international students to study in the US, and continued access to the GI education benefit for US veterans, to name a few.

There are also serious potential consequences for faculty who don't submit grades on time. Make it a priority to submit your grades on time. It's an essential part of your job if you teach students.

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### Student Loan Forgiveness

If you have student loan debt, have made regular payments, and have worked full-time for ten years anywhere in the University of Alaska system or at other public institutions, you should qualify for loan forgiveness under the newly revamped Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. Our national affiliate, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has partnered with a non-profit organization, [Summer](#), to help our members apply for and receive PSLF. Go to [this website](#) for more information.

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### Weingarten Rights

If you find yourself called into a meeting with your direct supervisor that you believe could result in discipline, you have the right to request union representation at that meeting. Contact your Organizational Vice President for guidance. From the [National Labor Relations Board](#) website:

Any meeting may be an “investigatory interview” provided that the following occur:

- A manager, representative of management, or supervisor is seeking to question an employee.
- The questioning is part of an investigation into the employee’s performance or work conduct. During an investigatory interview, a representative of management may require an employee to defend, explain, or admit misconduct or work performance issues that may form the basis for discipline or discharge.
- The employee reasonably believes that the investigation may result in discharge, discipline, demotion, or other adverse consequence to their job status or working conditions.
- The employee requests a union representative. Employers are not required to advise employees of their right to representation and third parties (including union representatives) may not make the request on behalf of the employee.

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## Bargaining Actions

- Participate in our new [Action Network Letter Campaign on Compensation](#)
- Take our latest [survey on what you’re not willing to accept in a new contract](#)
- Use our [Zoom backgrounds](#) for work meetings
- Log onto watch bargaining sessions; invite your colleagues and use our [Zoom backgrounds](#)
- Make a plan, make a sign, stand on street corners-organize local events with your colleagues outside of work hours
  - The June 2, 2022, BOR meeting is a great opportunity for those of you in Anchorage!
- Wear red on Mondays and during finals week
- If we don't reach tentative agreement on a new contract next week, stay tuned for a petition

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### Upcoming Bargaining

#### Sessions

(9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.)

**April 24-25**

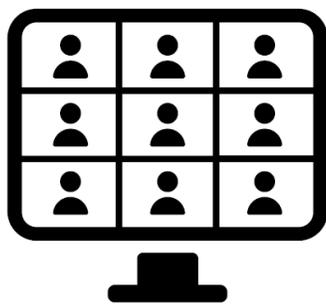
***future sessions yet to be determined***

### How To Log On

We send the Zoom link each morning of negotiations, and it's available on our website and our social media accounts.

We will attempt to keep our website and social media accounts updated with the current status of negotiations.

You can also use our social media accounts (see below) to make comments and see what your colleagues think about the negotiations in real time.



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## MEETING NOTICES

### **UNAC General Membership Meetings**

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, May 4, 2022

- Starting in May, we will hold monthly meetings on the first Wednesday of each month.

Separate emails with meeting information, including the agenda and Zoom link, will be sent to all members before each meeting.

### **Next UNAC Representative Assembly Meeting**

August 20, 2022 (Sat) 10:00am 2:00pm AKT via Zoom.

### **UNAC Executive Board Meetings**

Second and Fourth Wednesdays of each month, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

*Dues paying members are welcome to observe the RA and Executive Board meetings. Contact your Org VP and/or office staff for the Zoom link.*

## Your Membership Form is Not on File

*Please disregard this message if you have recently submitted an [opt-in form](#).*

Due to the 2018 Janus decision stating that collective bargaining units cannot force members to pay dues, United Academics is composed of dues payers (70%) and non-dues payers (30%).

UNAC represents *all* faculty, whether they are paying members or objectors, but we are a much stronger union because of our dues paying members. Dues-payers help us represent our members effectively through collective bargaining, grievances, and protecting your academic freedom and working conditions.

You can decide right now to help us be the strongest, most effective union we can be for all of our members. Fill out our opt-in membership [form](#) and send it to your Org VP and/or our Organizing Manager, Kate Quick (emails listed below).

A full 70% of our members pay dues; join them! Please consider filling out our [opt-in form](#) to become a full, dues-paying member of United Academics.

## Executive Board and Staff Contact

**President - Abel Bult-ito, Ph.D.**  
abel.bult.ito@unac4996ak.com

**Treasurer - Nelta Edwards, Ph.D.**  
nelta.edwards@unac4996ak.com

**Secretary - Charla Brown, Ph.D.**  
charla.brown@unac4996ak.com

**UAA Organizational VP - Tara Palmer**  
tara.palmer@unac4996ak.com

**UAS Organizational VP - Jill Dumesnil, Ph.D.**  
jill.dumesnil@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

**Organizing Manager - Kate Quick**  
kate.quick@unac4996ak.com

**United Academics Local #4996** (UNAC) is the bargaining unit that represents all non-tenure track (term), tenure track, and tenured 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).

[www.unitedacademics.net](http://www.unitedacademics.net)

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

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