



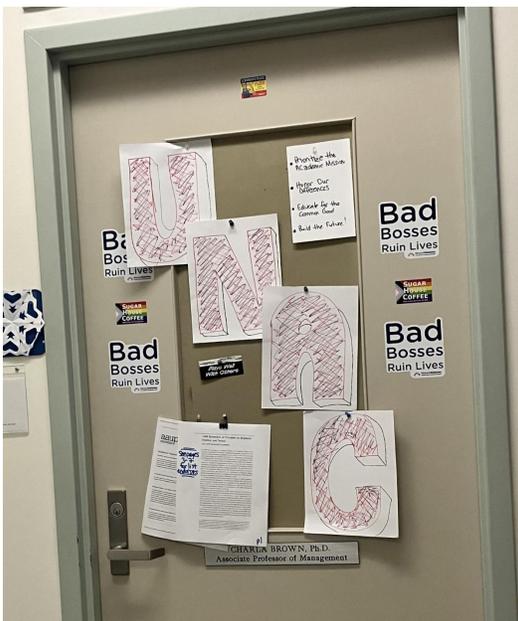
UNAC Connection - September 2022



In this issue:

- Actions
- Arbitration update
- Summary of BOR meeting and rallies at UAS
- AFT Legal Defense award
- From the Trenches
- Disagreement vs Disrespect
- Mediation Skeleton Crew
- Reminders

Faculty Solidarity



1. Download and use one of [these profile pictures](#) on our website as your Zoom profile picture during work meetings.
2. Make a homemade sign to hang on your office door that says "I support UNAC" and send a photo of your sign to staff or leadership.
3. Wear red on Wednesdays. If you have a UNAC shirt, wear it! If you want one, contact your Org VP or UNAC staff.
4. Share and re-Tweet this [AK AFL-CIO video featuring UNAC member Dr. Berman](#)

[Williams](#); on Twitter, tag @UAlaskaPres in your re-Tweet

Cell phone numbers and personal emails needed!!

We want the future ability to communicate with all of you without using UA emails or office phones.

Fill out this [short Google Form](#) if you haven't already provided this info to us.

Arbitration and Grievance Update

In mid-May 2022, we learned that United Academics had won our second and sole remaining arbitration from last academic year. The arbitrator determined that a full professor was wrongfully terminated during a program reduction; this member has since been reinstated and 'made whole' with a back pay award. However, the personal scars from such an experience will never disappear.

The University of Alaska system lost two arbitrations to United Academics in the past year and settled four other pending arbitrations and grievances in lieu of proceeding to arbitration and risking another loss for them and win for United Academics.

Each case cost both the UA system and the faculty union extensive time and money. If both parties honor and adhere to rules laid out in the CBA legally in effect, we could avoid these costly, emotionally trying, time consuming battles. The fact that UNAC won two arbitrations in one year - with a different arbitrator in each case - means management did not follow the CBA, with egregious negative impacts to specific faculty members.

The simple truth is that when the [2019 'compact' budget cuts](#) hit, the downsize-flurry and high turnover rates resulted in supervisors' poor adherence to our United Academics CBA. It's worth noting that, unlike last fall at this time, we do not have five pending step 4 grievances or arbitrations. We currently have two active grievances, none at step 4 yet.

Review article 7 of our [2017 CBA](#) for details of the grievance/arbitration process.

UNAC Receives AFT Legal Defense Award

To help cover the legal expenses of defending our CBA, UNAC leadership applied for a grant through the Legal Defense Fund of our national affiliate, American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

Our application was approved and UNAC was recently awarded \$146,679.57 to help cover our legal expenses related to recent grievances and arbitrations. AFT leaders have encouraged us to apply for new

grants to help cover legal expenses associated with our recent [Unfair Labor Practice complaint](#) filed with the Alaska Labor Relations Agency.



Board of Regents Meeting and Faculty Rallies at UAS

BOR Meeting Highlights

The UA Board of Regents held their most recent meeting at UAS in Juneau on September 8 and 9. Of note, the preliminary budget includes funding for raises of 2.75% for FY24, which is in line with the amount both parties have unofficially agreed to in recent proposals.

The 3% raises for this year, which both parties have also unofficially agreed to, would be paid retroactively and funded through a supplementary budget request to the legislature. However, state law requires a tentative agreement between both parties on a new contract before it can be considered by the legislature. Your UNAC bargaining team will continue to bargain in good faith toward an agreement our members in good standing will ratify.

UAS Rallies!

Faculty and allies in Juneau greeted the regents and administrators at a roundabout on their drive to the UAS campus Thursday morning at 8:00 a.m. to kick off the BOR meeting. Juneau folks showed up to support UA faculty, too!

At one point we had over 30 people in red clothes circling the roundabout. Commuters honked in support, and the [media paid attention](#). Several faculty members also [attended the BOR meeting](#), holding our signs and wearing our shirts in the crowd. Again, the [media paid attention](#).





On Friday morning, a smaller crowd gathered outside the building doors to greet the regents and administrators before their meeting started.



From the Trenches: Where is the Appreciation?



It's been a rough few years for everyone, and UA faculty throughout our university system have felt it keenly. Everyone has worked tirelessly to ensure that students' needs continue to be met while also excelling at research and creative endeavors. UNAC leadership (also faculty in the UA system) have felt this keenly alongside bargaining unit members. It's the reason our bargaining team started off with hopes of raises that would have kept pace with inflation, and other tangible improvements to faculty's working lives. As we keep saying, faculty working conditions are student learning conditions.

Dr. Colin McGill, associate professor of chemistry at UAA, was born and raised in Alaska. He earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees at UAF and feels deeply connected to both UAA and UAF. It's obvious that he loves his work and believes in the power of the UA system to improve the lives of Alaskans. Dr. McGill hopes his own kids (4, 6) attend a school in the UA system one day.

He wants his children to be able to stay in Alaska as adults; he wants to stay in Alaska. However, the budget cuts that led to zero raises in the last CBA, the 2019 *more extreme* budget cuts, the ensuing program closures and reductions, all

compounded by the pandemic-related workload increases, have been hard on Dr. McGill, and on every UNAC faculty member. Faculty have been squeezed too hard to do more with less. Yet we have risen to the occasion and kept UA on target to meet its missions and satisfy accreditation requirements.

After all the extra work faculty performed to keep UA's students learning, the past year of hard bargaining and the system office's dishonest communications about negotiations have hit faculty especially hard. Dr. McGill expressed what we've heard repeatedly: "I think faculty thought there would be appreciation on the other side of it. It's clear that's not the case."

As Dr. McGill put it, a start to rounding the corner, coming out of these budget crises, and supporting faculty and the programs we run, is for the UA administration to agree to a reasonable contract with UNAC faculty.

Disagreement is not Disrespect

Sometimes it's easy to forget that civil discourse is a foundation of academic life. We teach students to engage in civil discourse every day in our classrooms, labs, and creative spaces when we encourage them to contemplate important topics.

Without differing points of view, these discussions would be very short, and this world would be a boring place. More importantly, new ideas would flounder, and we would never feel challenged to a deeper understanding. This is true in our learning spaces, and it is true in our shared governance spaces too.

Don't let yourself be intimidated into staying silent when an important discussion needs to be had in the departmental, committee, or senate arena of academic life.



Skeleton Crew for Mediation Sessions

Over the summer, we entered a new phase of bargaining: mediation. Mediation sessions are not open to the public and cannot be viewed on Zoom. At the start of the fall semester, several bargaining team members were needed by their departments and have returned to their normal faculty workloads. This includes chief negotiator Tony Rickard, UAF rep Kris Racina, and extended sites rep Andy Anger.

The new 'skeleton crew' includes the following members: chief negotiator Melanie

Arthur, UAF rep Abel Bult-ito, UAA rep Tara Palmer, and UAS rep Jill Dumesnil. Extended sites are being represented by their affiliated main campus rep. Skeleton crew members are not bought out for their current work on the new bargaining team due to the decreased amount of work involved. Take a moment to thank these faculty leaders for their dedication and hard work to get a fair deal for faculty!

We have two future mediation dates set: September 19 and 28. Currently, the skeleton crew has provided [individual proposals of all remaining items](#) (scroll to 'unpackaged mediation proposals 8/31'); management should respond to these proposals on September 19.

MEETING NOTICES

UNAC General Membership Meetings

Regularly scheduled meetings: every second Tuesday from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Additional meetings scheduled as needed. Separate emails with meeting information, including the Zoom link, will be sent to all bargaining unit members before each meeting.

NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Tuesday, October 11, 2022 - 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Next UNAC Representative Assembly Meeting

November 12, 2022 (Sat) 10:00am - 2:00pm AKT via Zoom

UNAC Executive Board Meetings

Second and Fourth Wednesdays of each month, 1:30 a.m.-3:30 p.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.



Executive Board and Staff Contact

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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

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