



## UNAC Connection - February 2023

**\* HONOR OUR DIFFERENCES \* PRIORITIZE THE ACADEMIC MISSION  
\* EDUCATE FOR THE COMMON GOOD \* BUILD FOR THE FUTURE**



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## New UNAC Officer Announcements

Changes are coming to United Academics leadership!

Dr. Jill Dumesnil, Professor of Mathematics at UAS, will be making UNAC history as our first woman to hold the office of president since the union was formed in 1996, and as our first president from UAS. Congratulations to Jill Dumesnil and all newly elected and appointed officers.

**President:** Jill Dumesnil, UAS

**Secretary:** Abel Bult-Ito, UAF

**Treasurer:** Nelta Edwards, UAA

**Extended Sites Vice President:** Cindy Trussell (appointed for final year of term due to VP retirement)

Congratulations to our new United Academics officers! They will all start their service on July 1, 2023. Reach out to them to offer your congratulations!

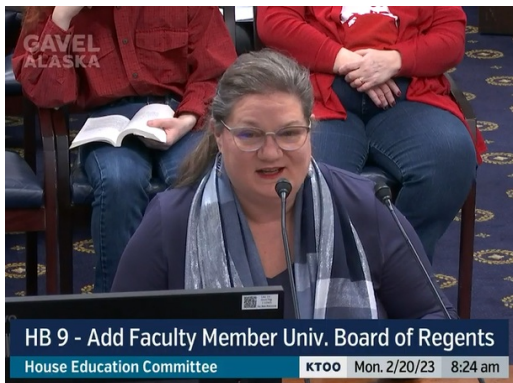
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## Update on House Bill 9: Adding a Faculty Regent to the BOR

Representative Carrick (*pictured below, bottom left*) is sponsoring this bill. Her office recently requested proof that UA faculty support this bill, so we put out the call for signatories on a letter in support adding a faculty regent as a voting member to the Board of Regents. We had under three days to gather signatures.

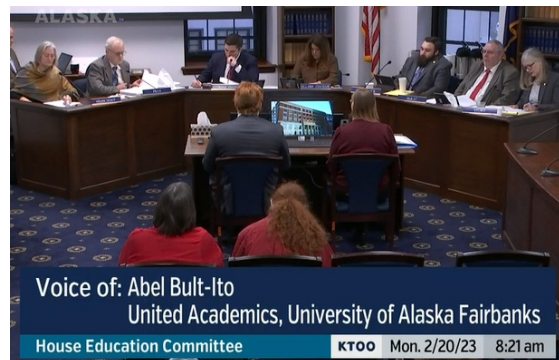
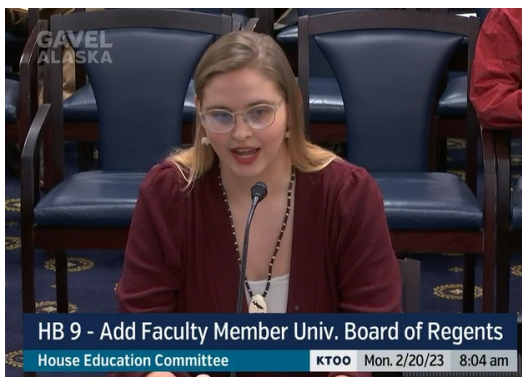
**384 faculty members signed that letter!** We forwarded the letter, with all 384 signatures and pages of additional comments, to Representative Carrick for use as she presents this bill in the legislature. She included our letter with her packet of information for the House Education Committee hearing of the bill.

### HB9 First Hearing in House Education Committee



On Monday, February 20, 2023, at 8:00 a.m. the bill had its [first hearing](#) in the House Education Committee.

Three of UNAC's officers gave excellent verbal testimony in support of a faculty regent during the bill's first hearing. (*pictured left: Dr. Jill Dumesnil*)



The concept behind the bill has wide support among legislators; during a whirlwind visit to the state capitol building on February 14-17, UNAC representatives met with over 40 different legislators, and only one did not express support for a faculty regent.

Please continue to advocate for HB9 in the coming weeks. Write to your [Representative](#) and ask them to support HB9. Write to your [Senator](#) and encourage them to sponsor a companion bill in the Senate to help make this faculty regent legislation a reality.

It's important for all Alaskans to stay up-to-date on legislative activity, but it can be overwhelming.

Following are two easy ways to get legislative updates:

- enroll in text alerts for specific bills: text a bill number (ex: HB9) to 559-245-2529.
- Sign up for Alaska Public Employee Association (APEA) legislative updates: send an email to <mrohrbacher@apea-aft.org> with the subject line "Legislative update" to be added to his list for email updates.

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## **Postdoc Q & A**

With our [new CBA](#) and the inclusion of all UA postdoctoral fellows, our bargaining unit membership is now in line with our legal unit definition as defined by the Alaska Labor Relations Agency (ALRA).

Some questions have come to our attention regarding the implications for postdocs of being included in the UNAC bargaining unit. We provide them here with answers and/or clarification.

### **Question: When do postdocs need to complete workloads?**

- Although our current CBA is retroactive to January 1, 2022, Postdocs do NOT need to retroactively fill out a workload for AY22-23.
- Workloads for AY23-24 will be due to the appropriate department head/chair by March 1, 2023. Postdocs who are working with a Principal Investigator (PI) will confer with their PI to ensure that the postdoc's workload supports the PI's work.

### **Question: When do postdocs need to complete annual activities reports?**

- Annual activities reports and annual evaluations by the appropriate dean or director will likely be delayed until Fall 2024 by mutual agreement between the University of Alaska and United Academics.
- This delay in implementation will allow postdocs to be evaluated after the first year in which they have a formal workload, AY23-24.
- Unlike annual evaluations for other faculty members, the PI leading the postdoc's work will provide a written statement regarding the postdoc's performance to the dean, director, or designee who supervises the postdoctoral fellow.

### **Question: What benefits are available to postdocs now that they are included in the bargaining unit?**

- Fifteen days of paid Faculty Time Off (FTO) per nine-month appointment, plus an additional two days for each additional month worked, claimed on timesheets (claimed via timesheets).
- The option to cash-out up to five FTO days in lieu of time off ([link to cash-out form](#)).
  - To cash-out five days, postdocs (and all faculty) must have claimed FTO on their timesheets for December 27, 28, and 29.
  - *This can be done retroactively by accessing timesheets on*

- UNAC Professional Development Funds administered by each Provost's office (*made possible by our dues payers*).
- Increased transparency and equity in the terms and conditions of work.
- Additional job protections - including procedures ensuring that postdoctoral fellows can't be disciplined arbitrarily.
- [AFT benefits](#) (for dues payers only).
- [AAUP benefits](#) (for dues payers only).

**Question: [CBA Article 9.1.4](#) says that postdoctoral fellows must be no less than 51% FTE. Does this mean postdocs can't be hired to work less than half time?**

- No. This language is used for every category of faculty appointment in Article 9, and it is not uncommon for faculty members who take administrative positions to be categorized as 49% faculty and 51% administration.
- Those working less than 51% are not United Academics bargaining unit members, but they can still be employed by UA. Postdocs shouldn't be any different, though it is very unusual for postdocs to be hired part time.

**Question: Is there now a three-year limit for any postdoctoral fellow position, without the opportunity to renew?**

- No. University of Alaska Labor Relations has interpreted language in CBA Article 9.1.4 and 9.4.3 to mean that postdocs can't work for longer than 3 years at UA.
- We disagree with this interpretation and are working with the University to clarify it.

**Question: Why will postdocs no longer be supervised by their PI?**

- Hiring and supervision of postdocs will be under the unit director or their designee; faculty can 'lead' a postdoctoral fellow in day-to-day work, but any supervisory actions will be done by the director or their designee.
- This is a standard aspect of Collective Bargaining Agreements - members of the bargaining unit can't be supervised by other members of the same bargaining unit. There is no intention to change the day to day working relationship between PIs and postdocs. This has been successfully managed for over 25 years by advanced postdocs in their 4th year and beyond, who have already been UNAC bargaining unit members.

**Question: Can PIs still offer salary increases to individual postdocs?**

- No. Salary increases for postdoctoral fellows will need to be processed like other faculty salary increases through the dean or director's office.
- However, postdocs are eligible for retention, equity, market, and merit increases at the University's discretion.

**Question: Can postdoctoral fellows be promoted into a non-tenure track term or tenure track position?**

- No, but they have never been eligible for "promotion" into these positions. Direct appointment to a faculty position is not allowed under Board of Regents Policy, except in very rare cases described in [R04.03.035](#).
- As always, we encourage our postdocs to apply for positions within UA for which they are qualified.
- Postdocs who apply for and are hired into a non-tenure track term or tenure track position may request to count previous years of postdoc



service toward a non-tenure track or tenure track position at time of hire, subject to approval by the hiring authority.

We assure all of our PIs and postdocs that this change in union representation is in everyone's best interest. It's the unit definition given to United Academics by the Alaska Labor Relations Agency, and postdoc representation will benefit all of our members by expanding our union and making our solidarity stronger.



## **Resolution in Support of AGWA -UAW: Graduate & Academic Student Employee Unionization Efforts**

On Saturday, February 18, 2023, the United Academics Representative Assembly (UNAC RA) voted unanimously in favor of a [resolution](#) supporting our UA graduate students' efforts to unionize with UAW in their proposed bargaining unit, Alaskan Graduate Workers Association ([AGWA-UAW](#)).

Follow AGWA-UAW on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to stay updated. Share their important posts to help them get their message out.

In addition, read [this ADN article about their unionization efforts](#) from its February 22, 2023, edition.

If you work directly with graduate or undergraduate academic student employees (ASEs), talk with them about how you can support their efforts while they struggle to have their new union recognized by UA administration.

Our Universities can't function without our graduate and academic student workers, just as they can't function without all of us. We are *all* better off when we support improved working conditions and compensation for all employees in the system.



# Reminders

## **Workloads for AY24 due March 1, 2023, to Dept. Chairs**

- Review our [workload training](#) in these final days of workload preparation.
- Department chairs should also review this [workload training for department chairs](#).

## **Follow United Academics on Social Media**

- Like or follow our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.
- Like, share, or retweet our content!

## 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 General Membership Meeting (*date change due to spring break*): Tuesday, March 21, 5:30-7:00 p.m.

### Next UNAC Representative Assembly Meeting\*

Saturday, April 1, 2023 (Sat) 10:00am - 2:00p.m. AKT via Zoom

### UNAC Executive Board Meetings\*

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

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

## United Academics' Four Tenets of Excellence

United Academics leadership strives to practice these four tenets at work. If a proposed work obligation isn't fulfilling one of these four tenets, it is likely misguided.

Read more about the four tenets on [United Academics' website](#). The four tenets are as follows:

- Honor Our Differences
- Prioritize the Academic Mission
- Educate for the Common Good
- Build for the Future





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

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