



## **UNAC Connection - December 2023**



### **In this issue:**

- A Message from the President
- Member Spotlight
- Providence Update
- FTO and Winter Hard Closure
- UNAC YouTube channel
- New UNAC Website and URL
- UA LinkedIn Trainings
- Reminders

## **A Message from the President**

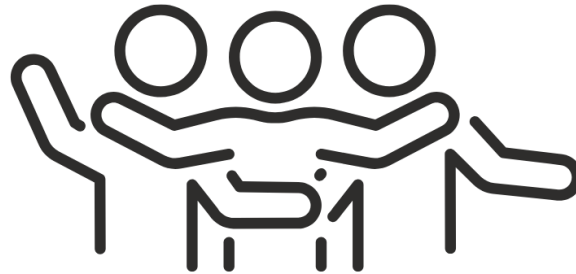
*By Jill Dumesnil*

Six months into my term as President of United Academics, I'm still growing into the role and getting up to speed. I'm very grateful to the membership for your patience and support, but mostly I'm grateful for your unwavering dedication to our students, our colleagues, and our profession. Higher education, in general, and higher education faculty, in particular, are under attack from within and without. The notions of the collective and the common good are being regularly challenged. We know, however, that we are stronger together and that together we can protect each other from unfair and unequal treatment.

United Academics is working to protect your rights, treatment, and conditions in the workplace. We are continuing to work on issues surrounding healthcare: premiums, deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, timing of coverage. Last month's newsletter contained testimony from a former member about how we assisted her. We are also working on protecting our members from arbitrary discipline, from discipline in violation of the tenets of just cause, and from discipline without following the negotiated process in our CBA. Likewise, we are fighting to protect your academic freedom to teach your courses and to assign appropriate grades to students without administrative interference. In addition, we are challenging instances in which your

right to criticize your supervisor and/or the university is being infringed. We are also working to assist multiple members in navigating the complex processes involved in applying for leave and/or accommodations guaranteed under FMLA and ADA. Technically, this is a function of UA HR, but we can and do assist when contacted by members. Finally, we are filing grievances and representing members during investigations to ensure enforcement of our CBA. When in doubt, contact us for advice and assistance. We cannot always intervene, but we are happy to consider your issues and address your concerns.

Best wishes for a relaxing and well-deserved winter break!



## **UNAC Had my Back when a Shocking event Occurred!**

*By Deb Mole*



I take pretty good care of myself, so I never would have predicted the unfortunate health event I would experience during spring 2023. One dark morning in March I fainted, and when I awoke, I found the inside of my right arm impaled by a closet door handle! Without planning for this, I had used and committed my annual leave; as a result of this event, I quickly used up my sick leave. My radial nerves were impacted by this event, so I could not open my hand completely.

With the help of UNAC and the support of my Department Chair and Dean, I applied for Family Medical Leave (FML). Unfortunately, this is not an easy, intuitive process. Without the help of UNAC's Contract Manager, Melanie Arthur, the frustrating UNUM application process may have ended my FML pursuit. Not only did the union help in this regard, the UNAC sick leave bank was also an immense blessing! It allowed me to receive continued salary during the times I was unable to work due to limited hand functionality. I am extremely appreciative for the support afforded by the union and comforted by the reassurance that the union is there for us when need arises. Thankfully, I am now in a position to confidently state that UNAC has my back; and the great news, UA faculty and postdocs, is that UNAC has your backs too!

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### **Health Insurance Update:**

# Providence to Remain in Network

As a result of successful negotiations between Premera and Alaska's largest hospital network, Providence will remain in network with Premera. Read this [Alaska Public Media article](#) for more details.

## FTO and Winter Hard Closure

Winter break is upon us! [CBA](#) article 16.5 specifies that Faculty Time Off (FTO) must be used during hard closure in order to be eligible for cash-in of up to five days of FTO.

This year, the three required days are:

1. Wednesday, December 27
2. Thursday, December 28
3. Friday, December 29

If you are scheduled to work during the three hard closure dates, please contact your Org VP or UNAC's office staff (contacts below) for assistance. Exceptions can be made to this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

### UNAC's YouTube Channel

UNAC has a [YouTube channel](#)! On it, you can find videos on various topics:

- faculty promotion
- UNAC leadership roles
- UNAC's bargaining unit structure
- and more

Don't see a video or training you'd like to see? Contact us at [membership@unac4996ak.com](mailto:membership@unac4996ak.com) or 907-799-5031.

### UNAC's New Website & Domain

Check out our new website—[unitedacademicsak.org](http://unitedacademicsak.org) On it, you'll find:

- helpful union resources
- our governing documents
- info on our current Executive Board and Representative Assembly member
- back-issues of our newsletters and more

Our new website has a new domain name for better clarity of which United Academics Local we are - there are several United Academics chapters around the country. The new domain name also resolves internal issues with our former URL.

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## Reminders

### UA LinkedIn Trainings

UA has partnered with LinkedIn to provide a plethora of trainings to all UA employees. Here is the website for the LinkedIn Learning:

<https://www.alaska.edu/hr/training/linkedin.php>

Please [contact HR](#) if you have questions or suggestions regarding these trainings.

## Professional Development Funds

Thanks to our dues paying members, each University has annual Professional Development Awards that UNAC bargaining unit members of every rank and title are eligible to apply for. These funds are described in Article 15.9 of our [CBA](#) and are to be used as monetary assistance for professional development opportunities. Each University follows slightly different application processes. Each provosts' office can help members work through the application process for their University.

## UNAC Sick Leave Bank

The Sick Leave Bank application can be found under 'forms and guidelines' on this [UA Labor and Employee Relations](#) webpage.

The UNAC sick leave bank was formerly the UAFT sick leave bank; when the two unions merged into UNAC in 2018, the sick leave bank became the UNAC sick leave bank. It was incorporated into our most recent CBA (article 16.8).

## Current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)

Our CBA is available on our United Academics website:

<http://unitedacademics.net/collective-bargaining-agreement-cba/>

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# Meeting Notices

## UNAC General Membership Meetings

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

### Next General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, January 9, 2024, 5:30-7:00 p.m. AKT

### Next UNAC Representative Assembly Meeting\*

Saturday, February 17, 2024, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. AKT via Zoom

### UNAC Executive Board Meetings\*

First and third Wednesday of each month, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. AKT

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



# Executive Board and Staff Contacts

**President - Jill Dumesnil, Ph.D.**  
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**Treasurer - Nelta Edwards, Ph.D.**  
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**Extended Sites Organizational VP - Cindy Trussell, Ph.D.**  
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**Contract Manager - Melanie Arthur, Ph.D.**  
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**Organizing Manager - Kate Quick**  
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**United Academics Local #4996** (UNAC) is the bargaining unit that represents post doctoral fellows, 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).

[unitedacademicsak.org](http://unitedacademicsak.org)

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