

## **UNAC Connection - May 2025**



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### **Spotlight: UAS Juneau Faculty**

At UAS's recent commencement ceremony, UNAC's UAS Org VP, Andrea Dewees, quickly organized a silent and salient faculty protest. As regent Dale Anderson spoke, faculty members held up sheets of paper with the handwritten words "diversity, equity, inclusion". This action successfully emphasized that UAS faculty do not support the UA Board of Regent's anti-DEI motion banning these words from use in public facing materials. This faculty action also supported the student speaker's message.

This action wasn't planned weeks or even days in advance. Late in the morning of commencement, Andrea had an idea and ran it by some colleagues. Their enthusiasm gave her courage and others helped by communicating the plan and distributing approximately 30 signs. Faculty filed into the ceremony holding the signs, and they held up the signs as Regent Dale Anderson walked to the podium and throughout his speech. THIS is solidarity. THIS is pushing back respectfully, together, when we know something is wrong. The *Juneau Empire* wrote [this article about UAS commencement](#), highlighting the DEI signs, the student speaker's address, and UAS's annual Alaska Native Graduation.





UAS faculty hold up "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" signs at the University of Alaska Southeast commencement on Sunday, May 4, 2025. (Jasz Garrett / Juneau Empire)

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## Summer Contracts & Workload Extensions

For those of you teaching classes this summer, our CBA does not allow for per-student payment for low-enrolled students. Our CBA is clear that the minimum payment per credit for summer courses is \$1,500. This amount is already well below what you're paid per credit for academic year courses. Payment on a per student rate would be even lower than what our CBA allows. The CBA also allows you to be paid more than the minimum. *Request payment at your academic year, per credit hour pay rate!*

If you are working on a workload extension to continue non-teaching work during the summer months, you should be paid equivalent to your academic year pay for the period you're under contract. FTO should continue to accrue during your contract extension, and you are entitled to use FTO during your contract extension.

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## UNAC Secretary Appointment

Our current secretary, Abel Bult-Ito, is going on sabbatical for AY26, and thus cannot complete his last of three years as our union secretary. UNAC's By-Laws state that our leadership will appoint a replacement if less than half of the officer's term remains.

We are pleased to announce that Richie Berndt, UAF CTC Associate Professor of EMS/Paramedicine, has agreed to fill the role of secretary for





AY26. He will take over from Abel effective immediately. Thank Abel and Richie for their service!

## **AY26 United Academics Officer Elections & Negotiation Team Nominations**

### **Officer Elections**

Next winter, our dues paying members in good standing (pays dues for 3+ months) will have the opportunity to run for the position of UNAC President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The election will occur in February, with nominations taking place in the weeks before. Spend the summer thinking about which of these positions you want to run for!

The Labor Notes workshop below is a great opportunity to learn what it takes to run for and hold a union office. Sign up and then run for office next year!

**Labor Notes Online workshop:** Running for Union Office

**Date:** May 19, 2025

**Time:** 4:00 pm AKDT

**Location:** Zoom - [Register here](#)

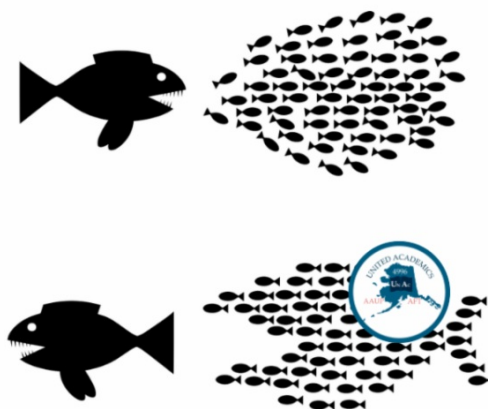
### **Negotiation Team Nominations**

Yes, we just finished negotiating our Collective Bargaining Agreement (UA hasn't even posted it online yet!). And yes, it is already time to start selecting our next Negotiation Team.

*We'll select team members in spring 2026, before AY27 workloads are due.*

This timeline will ensure that our team members have workload buyout for their work on our negotiations team. The selection process will begin with our Collective Bargaining Committee in August – watch your email for opportunities to join this committee and be part of the process.





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## Legislative Update

### Adding a Faculty Member to the Board of Regents

[HB10](#) would add a faculty member to the UA BOR and is currently on the House floor. An amendment was added on May 5, 2025, to sunset the faculty regent after 6 years if the logistics and process are not working well. This amendment passed. A final vote on the House floor is set to occur before the Legislature adjourns this spring. The Senate version of this bill is working its way through Senate committees.

### Return to Public Pensions

Returning Alaska's Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) and Teachers Retirement System (TRS) to a defined benefit (DB) system has been a Labor goal since 2006, when Alaska's previous DB system changed to defined contributions (DC).

In a DB plan, retirement payments are set based on a percentage of your three highest salary years, and retirement benefits are paid until your death. In our DC system, retirees' payments are a percentage of the money you've paid into your account, and retirement payments stop when your account is empty. Switching from DC back to DB is an uphill battle, but recent actuarial data is favorable for returning the state to a DB system.

\*Our legislature runs in two-year cycles. Bills that are currently active when the legislature adjourns this spring will be picked up in January 2026, when the legislature reconvenes.

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## Strike Solidarity Corner

Workers around the world, in every profession, share one common goal: to be respected for the work they perform. The working conditions of one group of workers influences the working conditions of other groups of workers at both a local and a global level. In the U.S., strikes won us weekends (1938), the 40-hour work week (1940), an end to child labor (1938), a plethora of safety rules, and improved wages.

Following is a sampling of current workers fighting for increased dignity at work:

- Over 50,000 Los Angeles County workers went on a two-day strike for better pay, causing closures and disruptions across the city's libraries, healthcare



clinics, and administrative offices. ([More here](#))

- Over 3,000 jet engine maker Pratt & Whitney in Connecticut are on strike for better pay, retirement benefits, more time off, and better job security. ([more here](#)).
- A recent strike threat at Portland State University was avoided when PSU's 1,172 faculty and academic professionals reached a deal with management, which includes the following compensation increases. *We could get wage increases like this too if we are prepared to strike to get them.*
  - In May, they'll get a 5% increase on the first \$75,000 they're paid; 1.5% on the next \$25,000; and 0.5% on the next \$50,000.
  - In the second year of the contract, they will get a 3% cost-of-living adjustment
  - In the third and fourth years, they will receive inflation-based adjustments. ([more here](#))

## UNAC Actions

- **BOR Public Testimony**
  - **Date:** Monday, May 19, 2025
  - **Time:** 4:00-5:00 pm AKDT
  - **Location:** 1-866-831-8713
- **BOR Full Board Meeting**
  - **Date:** Wednesday, May 21 - Thursday, May 22, 2025
  - **Time:** TBD. *When the agenda is posted, we will send a specific action request to our Fairbanks members*
  - **Location:** Butrovich 109, UAF Troth Yeddha' Campus
- **Act as a two-way communication conduit** between your department and your union! This is an important way to help strengthen your union without attending more monthly meetings. To learn more, sign up for this [Labor Notes "Stewards Workshop"](#) for only \$10.
  - **Date:** Wednesday, May 28
  - **Time:** 3:30-5:00 pm AKDT
  - **Location:** This is an online workshop and will be held via Zoom ([register here](#))

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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.

#### Next General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, May 14, 2025, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. AKDT

#### Next UNAC Representative Assembly Meeting\*

Saturday, August 16, 2025, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. AKDT

#### UNAC Executive Board Meetings\*

First and third Wednesday of each month, 8:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m. AKT

*\*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.*

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# Reminders

## **UNAC Website**

Please visit our United Academics website: [unitedacademicsak.org](https://unitedacademicsak.org) for helpful resources including:

- Executive Board officer contact info & Representative Assembly roster
- A pdf version of our current CBA
- An archive of our monthly newsletters
- E-Board and RA meeting minutes
- Our union by-laws and constitution
- Union member benefits
- And more

## **Social Media**

- Follow us at our new [BlueSky](#) account
- Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)
- Like and share our posts, and tag us in your own posts

## **YouTube Channel**

Our [YouTube channel](#) (@United Academics\_4996\_AK) has short member-to-member video messages, videos explaining union rights, training videos for promotion and workloads, and other informational content. Contact us if you have additional training or other video requests.

## **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:

<https://unitedacademicsak.org/resources/collective-bargaining-agreement-1>



## **Executive Board Contacts**

**President - Jill Dumesnil, Ph.D.**  
[jill.dumesnil@unac4996ak.com](mailto:jill.dumesnil@unac4996ak.com)

**Treasurer - Sharon Chamard, Ph.D.**  
[sharon.chamard@unac4996ak.com](mailto:sharon.chamard@unac4996ak.com)



**Secretary - Richie Berndt**  
richie.berndt@unac4996ak.com

**UAA Organizational VP - Ryan Harrod, Ph.D.**  
ryan.harrod@unac4996ak.com

**UAS Organizational VP - Andrea Dewees, Ph.D.**  
andrea.dewees@unac4996ak.com

**UAF Organizational VP - Ingrid Johnson, Ph.D.**  
ingrid.johnson@unac4996ak.com

**Extended Sites Organizational VP - Cindy Trussell, Ph.D.**  
cindy.trussell@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 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](https://unitedacademicsak.org)

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

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