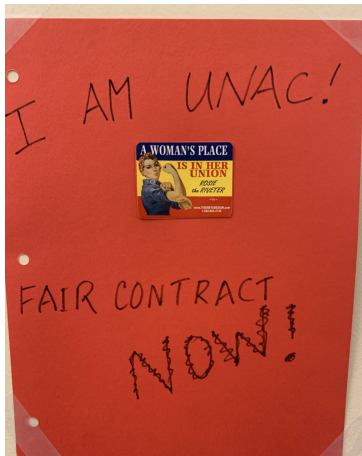




## UNAC Connection - October 2024



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## **STEPS TO A LEGAL STRIKE IN ALASKA**

*by UNAC President, Jill Dumesnil*



- CBA expiration (12/31/2024)
- Legal impasse in bargaining
- Mediation
- Strike authorization vote
- Need majority of bargaining unit
- Requires 558 “yes” votes
- 3-day notice to employer

The purpose of a strike is to create disruption and economic pressure on an employer to improve working conditions, wages, or benefits. There are several statutorily required steps for public employees to legally strike in Alaska as outlined in [AS 23.40.200](#). Our CBA must expire since we have a no strike/ no lockout clause. We must reach a legal impasse in bargaining as determined by the ALRA (Alaska Labor Relations Agency). ALRA will then direct us to mediation – usually with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS). If mediation fails, we can strike with a strike authorization vote of a majority of our bargaining unit members. For

UNAC that means 558 “yes” votes to authorize a strike. With historical voter turnout for UNAC elections, this is a very high bar for us. Finally, we are required to give 3-day notice to UA before striking. UA would likely seek an injunction in superior court to stop any planned strike. “A strike may not be enjoined unless it can be shown that it has begun to threaten the health, safety, or welfare of the public.” If an impasse persists after the issuance of an injunction, then the parties must submit to binding arbitration.

While on strike, workers do not get paid by their employer, do not have access to their benefits (unless they pay for COBRA coverage), and are not eligible for unemployment benefits. Some large, national unions, like UAW, have strike funds that help striking members pay for housing, food, and other essential expenses. UAW, with a strike fund totaling more than \$825 million, pays \$500 per week to striking workers after the eighth day of a strike. Their fund would be exhausted in 12 weeks if all 150,000 members went on strike. Note that UAW is a national union, and their strike fund is national. Our national affiliate, AFT, does not have an equivalent strike fund, and local unions almost never do. Unions can offer strike pay from their general funds, but most small local unions do not have the resources to do so. To pay \$500 per week to 700 striking members costs \$350,000 per week and would top \$1 million in 3 weeks. Therefore, striking requires both conviction and planning.

Prior to any consideration of a strike, we can apply pressure and show management that faculty are serious about needing significant pay increases by building solidarity among our members and ramping up member action and member participation. YOUR participation is critical. The CCAT (Contract Campaign Action Team) has been working to rally UNAC membership in support of our Negotiation Team. They have been highlighting faculty members from across the state in a social media campaign as well as organizing events and actions at various campuses. Here are some ways that you can help.

- Fill out our “[UNAC Member Testimony](#)” form to participate in our social media campaign
- Wear red on Mondays
- Wear UNAC shirts, hats, buttons anytime
- Attend and observe bargaining sessions
- Make and post a UNAC door sign
- Use a UNAC image as your Zoom profile picture
- Write letters to Board of Regents and President Pitney
- Write letters to newspapers or op-ed pieces
- Participate in informational picketing or group actions
- Talk to your colleagues and encourage their participation



# Member Spotlights



## **AAUP Summer Institute & Solidarity**

*By Jackie Cason*

Thanks to funding from UNAC, I had the opportunity to accompany the Faculty Alliance Chair, Jennifer Carroll, to the most recent AAUP Summer Institute in Detroit, MI, home to **a storied labor history**, including the **Ford Hunger March**, Motown, and **Diego Rivera's Industry Murals**. An evening bus tour and trips to the historical and art museums gave us a close up view of that history. While UA management may

conflate the concepts of shared governance and union activities in its documents, these are two different functions. AAUP has been a guiding light as we navigate both arenas, and I am grateful for the opportunity to represent faculty and to have attended this annual meeting.

Many of the keynote speakers and sessions were meaningful, but the opportunity for Jennie and I to network across the state in our respective shared governance roles has helped us to continue reflecting on the role that **generative AI will play in the academy** as we plan ahead for this year—even sparking an idea for a spring forum highlighting the *university as a public good*.

It is satisfying to see our union leadership demonstrating many of the lessons I learned at the Institute. UNAC is using **public narratives** to communicate our values, connecting personal faculty stories to the collective academic goals of postsecondary education. We are working to **build coalitions across faculty ranks** and reinforcing the long-standing commitment to **collective bargaining, shared governance, and academic freedom**. An additional AAUP resource that feels timely in a year when we renegotiate our CBA is a set of **tools for financial analysis** of the institution, including a **financial analysis template** for public institutions.

Academics value their autonomy (I know I do), but the AAUP experience has reinforced in me the need for solidarity. A collective voice is always more powerful than a collection of voices, and our working conditions really do shape the research, teaching, and learning landscape. For all these reasons, UNAC leadership is working on behalf of all of us, so that we can enjoy the autonomy we value and create conditions conducive to learning. To avoid further deterioration of these working and learning conditions, I urge fellow members to attend the negotiation meetings as schedules allow and to vocally support our negotiation team's goals.

## **A Word from Our Former Chief Negotiator: Tony Rickard**



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## AY25 Grievance Update

### Step 1 Grievances

- None

### Step 2 Grievances: 2

- Termination for cause over violation of a remote work agreement without first undergoing the disciplinary procedures to ensure the member knew the seriousness of their violation
- Postdoc brought here with paperwork indicating three years of employment was non retained before minimum 9-month appointment was completed due to lack of funding

### Step 3 Grievances: 1

- Tenured professor whose position was eliminated after a verbal discussion of plans to retire, without the professor putting retirement plans in an official email to the supervisor.

### Step 4 grievances: 2

- **Benefits Arrears**

Article 16 of our CBA was violated on a systemwide scale when HR began collecting FY24 summer benefits arrears from our members in FY25. We are therefore filed a step 4 grievance with President Pitney to remedy the new 'arrears' system of paying for our benefits.

As a refresher, UA recently made drastic changes to their longstanding practice of deducting a full year of benefits over nine months for members who don't work in the summer. Now, they have put all UA employees on a 12-month deduction cycle, and our members who are not being paid in the summer accrue benefits arrears that are then

deducted from fall paychecks at 40% of the total until the arrears balance is gone. This violates article 16.1.a.2, which states that an employee's option charges for the UA Choice plans "will be collected on a fiscal year basis." By collecting arrears for the previous fiscal year's option charges, UA is ignoring our CBA.

- **New member list**

During the last round of bargaining, we negotiated new language intended to give us earlier access to new hires in Article 5.8. UA is to provide us a complete list of all bargaining unit members on August 15 and January 10 each year. We have been receiving these lists since fall 2022, and they have never included even half of the new hires. We tried to work with labor relations, who blamed late paperwork. We finally filed a Step 4 grievance earlier this week.

Keeping our newly hired members hidden from us makes it impossible for UNAC to communicate with or onboard new members. The remedy we seek is simply for UA to improve their paperwork methods and produce a comprehensive list to include all new hires by the agreed-upon dates.

### **How to File a Grievance through UNAC**

We file grievances when we hear of a contract violation within the allowable timeline. If you think your supervisor may be violating our CBA, we encourage you to contact us right away at [contract@unac4996ak.com](mailto:contract@unac4996ak.com)

Even if your issue turns out not to be a contract violation, we can likely help you resolve the issue through our informal channels or by helping you advocate for yourself to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

## **Straw Poll Results: Option to Distribute 9 Months' Pay Over 12 Months**

The results are in (but the sample is very small). 81 out of 1,104 bargaining unit members responded to our single question straw poll about whether our members want the option to split 9 months of pay over 12 months. This is especially relevant to members who don't work in the summer, or who teach summer classes at a rate of \$1500/credit hour.

Following are the poll results:

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>64 (79%)</b>	<b>17 (21%)</b>

CHRO Memry Dahl has told us in previous Meet & Confers that it is now possible to split 9 months of pay over 12 months, thanks to UA's new Banner system. We will discuss this long-standing issue at our next Meet and Confer with management. We will keep you updated on this topic.

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# Success! Informational Picketing at UAA

UAA faculty members and allies gathered outside the library on a chilly Thursday afternoon to show our solidarity and make our voices heard. This type of action, with increasing participation from our bargaining unit members, is the only thing that will give our negotiation team enough power to bargain a competitive contract!



## URGENT Member Actions to BOR

Our regents need to hear from us!

1. BOR Public Testimony on Monday, November 4, 2024 @ 4:00 p.m.
2. Write emails to our BOR

Whether you write the regents an email or call in for public testimony, [use these talking points](#) and adapt them to suit your message. All email addresses are included in the pdf. Directions for public testimony are in the flier below.

# UA BOR PUBLIC TESTIMONY



**1-888-886-7786**

# HOW TO

## TIPS TO SUCCESSFUL TESTIMONY

- ✓ Call to get in the queue by 4:00 pm AKT
- ✓ Testimony is limited to two minutes
- ✓ Discuss only one topic (relevant to UA)
- ✓ Decide on your topic ahead of time
- ✓ Write a script or list of points to make
- ✓ Start your script with "Mr. Chair and members of the Board of Regents, my name is (your name), calling from (city)"
- ✓ Practice and stay on script
- ✓ Be yourself



## BOR "Informational Picketing" at UAF Friday 11/8 at 8:00 a.m.

Faculty and postdocs in Fairbanks—we need you at 8:00 a.m. at the Butrovich Building (room 109) on Friday, November 8, 2024.

We won't disrupt the meeting, but *we'll make sure the regents know we are there, and we care*. Just like we did during our last round of bargaining when the BOR met at UAA and UAS, we will file into the audience with signs to hold while we watch the proceedings. We need to let them know that everyone in our bargaining unit cares about our contract, and we care about the UA budget.

Friday morning starts with a "roadmap to empower AK," and we are a critical part of that empowerment. Without us, UA's mission grinds to a halt. Even if you can't stay for long, join us for a short time.

### Not in Fairbanks but you want to come?

If you pay your way to Fairbanks, we will reserve enough Air BnBs to house people.

Contact us by November 4, 2024, at [membership@unac4996ak.com](mailto:membership@unac4996ak.com) to let us know you're coming so we can ensure we have enough space reserved.

# UNAC WALK-IN @ BOR

**8:00 A.M.  
FRIDAY, 11/8  
BUTROVICH 109**

**WEAR RED!**



More Information:  
[membership@unac4996ak.com](mailto:membership@unac4996ak.com)



## Ongoing Actions

- Wear red clothing every Monday
- Use our [Zoom profile pictures](#) and background images for work meetings. Images are available on [our website](#), along with directions for downloading and using them.
- Share our social media content
  - [Facebook](#)
  - [Instagram](#)
- Hang a homemade "I support UNAC" sign on your office door
- Attend our bargaining sessions as time allows

## Upcoming Bargaining Dates

- November 12, 2024
- November 25 and 26, 2024

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## Strike Solidarity Corner



Striking Boeing workers voted to reject a TA'd contract that would have provided a 35% pay increase over 4 years, a \$7,000 bonus, increased 401K contributions, and more. They have been on strike for 46 days and continue to strike for the above provisions PLUS a return to their old pension plan.

Dockworkers **suspended their three-day strike** until January 15, 2025, after their union and management tentatively agreed to the wage portion of their contract with 62% wage increase over 6 years! The strike is suspended while the union and management negotiate non-monetary sticking points in their contract, such as automation.

In Kenya, University workers were on a **nation-wide strike in September**, fighting for better pay and implementation of their CBAs. Police used tear gas against striking faculty and staff, and arrested at least 21 lecturers. Their unions subsequently reached a 'return to work' deal with the Kenyan government but are preparing to go **back on strike by October 29, 2024**, saying their government has not upheld their side of the 'return to work' deal. Essentially, they say the Kenyan government has failed to implement and uphold their ratified collective bargaining agreements and has broken promises to increase pay or to even pay people on time. Sound familiar?

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## **Reminders**

### **UNAC Professional Development Funds**

Visit your Provost's website or office to learn how you can apply for you University's UNAC Professional Development Funds. If you miss the fall deadline, there will likely also be a spring deadline. Details are determined by a labor/management committee at each university.

### **UNAC Website**

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

- Up-to-date bargaining information
- 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

### **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/>

### **YouTube Channel**

Our [YouTube channel](#) (@United Academics\_4996\_AK) has training videos and other

informational content. Contact us if you have additional training or other video requests.

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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, November 12, 2024, 5:30-7:00 p.m. AKST

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

Saturday, February 15, 2024, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. AKST

### **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.*



## **Executive Board Contacts**

**President - Jill Dumesnil, Ph.D.**

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**Treasurer - Sharon Chamard, Ph.D.**

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**Secretary - Abel Bult-Ito, Ph.D.**

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**UAA Organizational VP - Ryan Harrod, Ph.D.**

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**UAS Organizational VP - Andrea Dewees, Ph.D.**

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**UAF Organizational VP - Douglas Cost, 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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