



## **UNAC Connection - March 2023**

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



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## **DON'T MISS Open Enrollment**

Open enrollment for UA benefits (health, dental, vision, life, etc) is now open and all eligible employees are required to participate this year. Even if you have previously opted out of health insurance, you must opt out again and re-enter your life insurance beneficiary information.

**All UA employees must complete this year's open enrollment by May 5, 2023.**

For more information on open enrollment, visit the following UA websites:

[Detailed employee benefits guide](#)

[UA open enrollment website](#)

### **BEWARE:**

**OUTDATED BENEFITS INFORMATION IS STILL LIVE ON THE UA BENEFITS WEBSITE!**

*Do not refer to the UA benefits website for accurate information.*

Correct information is only available on the two benefits sites linked above.  
For help, UA suggests employees email [ua-benefits@alaska.edu](mailto:ua-benefits@alaska.edu).

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## **Announcing Our New Vice Presidents**

For various reasons, we will have three new vice presidents for the next academic year. They will replace the current vice presidents for the final year of the term, with vice president elections scheduled for next spring.

The vice presidents for next year will be as follows:

- **UAA Anchorage**: Tara Palmer (continuing)
- **UAF Troth Yeddha'**: Doug Cost (replacing Mara Bacsujlaky)
- **UAS Juneau**: Kathy DiLorenzo (replacing incoming UNAC president, Jill Dumesnil)
- **Extended sites**: Cindy Trussell (replacing Rick McDonald)

We are excited to bring these new vice presidents into UNAC leadership roles, although we are also sorry to see Mara Bacsujlaky and Rick McDonald leaving the UA system.

Thank you to all of our officers, including our new Vice Presidents.  
Thank you to Mara and Rick for your years of service to UNAC and for your important work at UA!



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## **Letters to the Editor re: BOR**

We were saddened to hear that UA Regent Daryl Hargraves recently passed away. He was the only member of the BOR with a substantial background in

education, albeit k-12 education. He asked important questions and was not afraid to admit when he didn't understand something. These are traits we need in our regents.

We anxiously await news of who will be picked to replace Regent Hargraves. Further, we encourage our members to write letters to the editor and/or letters to Governor Dunleavy about the traits in a regent that are essential for a successful board.

Related, the legislature has yet to hold a joint floor session to confirm the four new regents appointed by Governor Dunleavy. This will happen in the coming weeks, and we are particularly concerned about appointee Bethany Marcum, who supported the 2019 proposed cuts to the UA budget that would have severely debilitated or killed the UA system.

We encourage our members to write to your legislators and your local newspaper regarding the appointment of Bethany Marcum, traits you want to see in a regent, and/or the addition of a faculty regent to the BOR.

**For help with these letters,** faculty members on United Academics' Legislative Relations Committee composed a [list of talking points and sample letters](#).

The committee members see these as drafts only and encourage members to copy them from the above linked document and revise as you see fit before sending to your local newspaper as a letter to the editor, or to your legislator or the governor.



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## **We Support Our Student Workers' Unionization Efforts**

We were sorry to learn that UA has filed yet another objection to AGWA/UAW's unionization efforts. This time, they're objecting to AGWA's amended filing to include only graduate student workers. UA contends that *all* student workers should be in the unit.

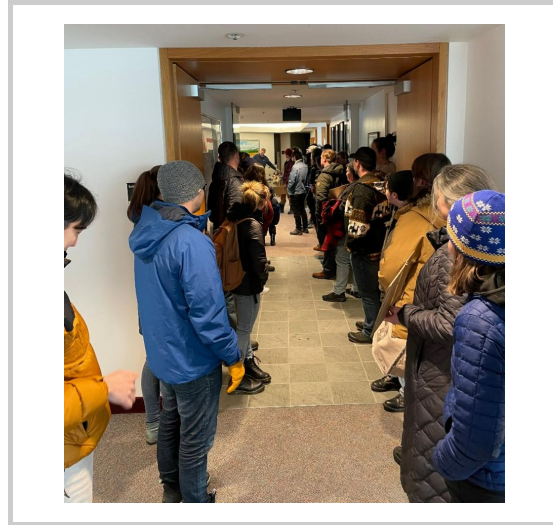
Rather than use their in-house general counsel's office for this, UA is spending additional state money to hire the same private law firm and lawyer they used during our arbitrations last year, *both of which we won* after a long, expensive, drawn-out process. This may bode well for AGWA/UAW's eventual success, but it means unnecessary delays and contention between the UA administration and our students, not to mention unneeded expenditure of state and UAW dollars.

One curious part of UA's objection says that any staff member who takes a class should be considered a student worker who would become an AGWA

bargaining unit member whenever they took a class, rather than a staff member using their education benefit.

It's unfortunate that our graduate student workers continue to face unneeded hurdles in their efforts to unionize, even after securing a super-majority of card signatures affirming graduate student workers' desire to form a union.

For now, they await a hearing before the Alaska Labor Relations Board (ALRA) to determine whether UA's objection has merit. This pushes their unionization efforts into the next academic year at the earliest. UNAC continues to support AGWA/UAW in their efforts. The whole reason UA exists is our students!



Pictured: UAF graduate student workers and allies marched to President Pitney's office to deliver speeches. Unfortunately, only one staff person was present to hear the speeches and greet the students. Several students gave passionate speeches about their struggles to financially support themselves and their families while continuing graduate school due to low pay from UA.

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## Legislative Updates

### **HB9, the Faculty Regent Bill**

This bill has not yet had a hearing in its second committee—the House Judiciary Committee. We anticipate that this bill will continue to be in play during the next legislative session, and we hope to see a companion bill in the Senate next year. The [sample letters](#) from faculty on our Legislative Relations Committee include a letter about HB9.

### **Approval of Supplemental Budget to Fund Back Pay**

We have no reason to think the back pay due to faculty continuing in their position from last year won't be eventually approved and appropriated. We are waiting on the legislature to approve the supplemental budget and next year's budget, which also includes raises for UNAC members. They are currently held up with the broader budget debates including k12 funding, a possible return to defined retirement benefits, and the amount of the PFD. We know this has been a long, drawn out process and we'd like to thank you all for your patience. We will be sure to let you all know when the back pay is distributed.

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## Reminders

# United Academics Four Tenets

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

## Current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)

Our new CBA is available on our United Academics website:

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

## Faculty Time Off (CBA article 16.5)

- **Time is running out to cash in up to five days of time off**
  - all UNAC bargaining unit members are eligible to cash-in up to five days of time off
  - *No unit is exempt from this benefit*, despite what supervisors might have said
- **Members must first claim at least five days of FTO as time off**
  - Required FTO dates - December 27, 28, 29, plus two more (see exceptions below)
  - None of these five days can be in the last pay period of the contract, so must be used and recorded prior to May 5
- **FTO cash-in for employees who had to work during hard closure**
  - All UNAC bargaining unit members are eligible to cash-in FTO days even if you had to work over the entire winter break
  - Contact your Org VP or UNAC staff for advice
- **Complete the FTO Cash-In Form After Claiming the Required Days Off**
  - [FTO cash-in form](#) is available on UA's payroll website.
  - Submission directions are available on the cash-in page linked above.
- **OR, claim up to fifteen days of time off before the end of the contract period**
  - Contract period ends May 13, 2023
  - Claim days off on your timesheet no later than May 5
  - Communicate with your supervisor regarding time off

## Upcoming UNAC Video Trainings

Soon, we will have short training videos available on our [YouTube channel](#) on the following topics. We'll send out a notification with links when the videos are available.

- Non-tenure track faculty promotion
- 4th year review, promotion, and tenure
- Post-tenure review
- Union 101

## Weingarten Rights

If you find yourself called into a meeting with your direct supervisor that you believe could result in discipline, you have the right to request union representation at that meeting. Contact your Organizational Vice President for guidance. From the [National Labor Relations Board](#) website:



Any meeting may be an “investigatory interview” provided that the following occur:

- A manager, representative of management, or supervisor is seeking to question an employee.
- The questioning is part of an investigation into the employee’s performance or work conduct. During an investigatory interview, a representative of management may require an employee to defend, explain, or admit misconduct or work performance issues that may form the basis for discipline or discharge.
- The employee reasonably believes that the investigation may result in discharge, discipline, demotion, or other adverse consequence to their job status or working conditions.
- The employee requests a union representative. Employers are not required to advise employees of their right to representation and third parties (including union representatives) may not make the request on behalf of the employee.

## **United Academics on Social Media**

- Like or follow our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.
- Like, share, or retweet our content!
- Use our [profile pictures and Zoom backgrounds](#) on your social media and Zoom accounts, especially during University Zoom meetings.

## **Meeting Notices**

### **UNAC General Membership Meetings**

- Regularly scheduled meetings: every second Tuesday 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, May 9, 2023, 5:30-7:00 p.m. AKDT

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

Saturday, August 19, 2023, 10:00am - 2:00p.m. AKDT via Zoom

### **UNAC Executive Board Meetings\***

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

*\*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 and Staff Contact

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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 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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