



UNAC Connection - December 2024



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Responding to Supervisors' Reviews

Promotion/Tenure Files

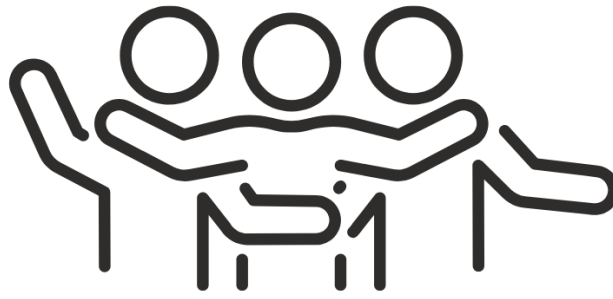
If you turned in a comprehensive review file (4th year, tenure, promotion, or post-tenure) expect your dean/director's review by December 20.

You have until January 3 to respond if you have any clarification to add. We are happy to provide input on your response if desired; union staff will be available over the break/hard closure to do that (contract@unac4996ak.com).

Annual Performance

Annual reviews from your dean/director are due back to you by January 15. Because this goes in your personnel file, you have the opportunity to respond with an attached letter in your file.

If anything in your supervisor's annual review is inaccurate, outside of the period of review, or otherwise problematic, please reach out to us for input on your options to respond (contract@unac4996ak.com).



Benefits of Being in a Union

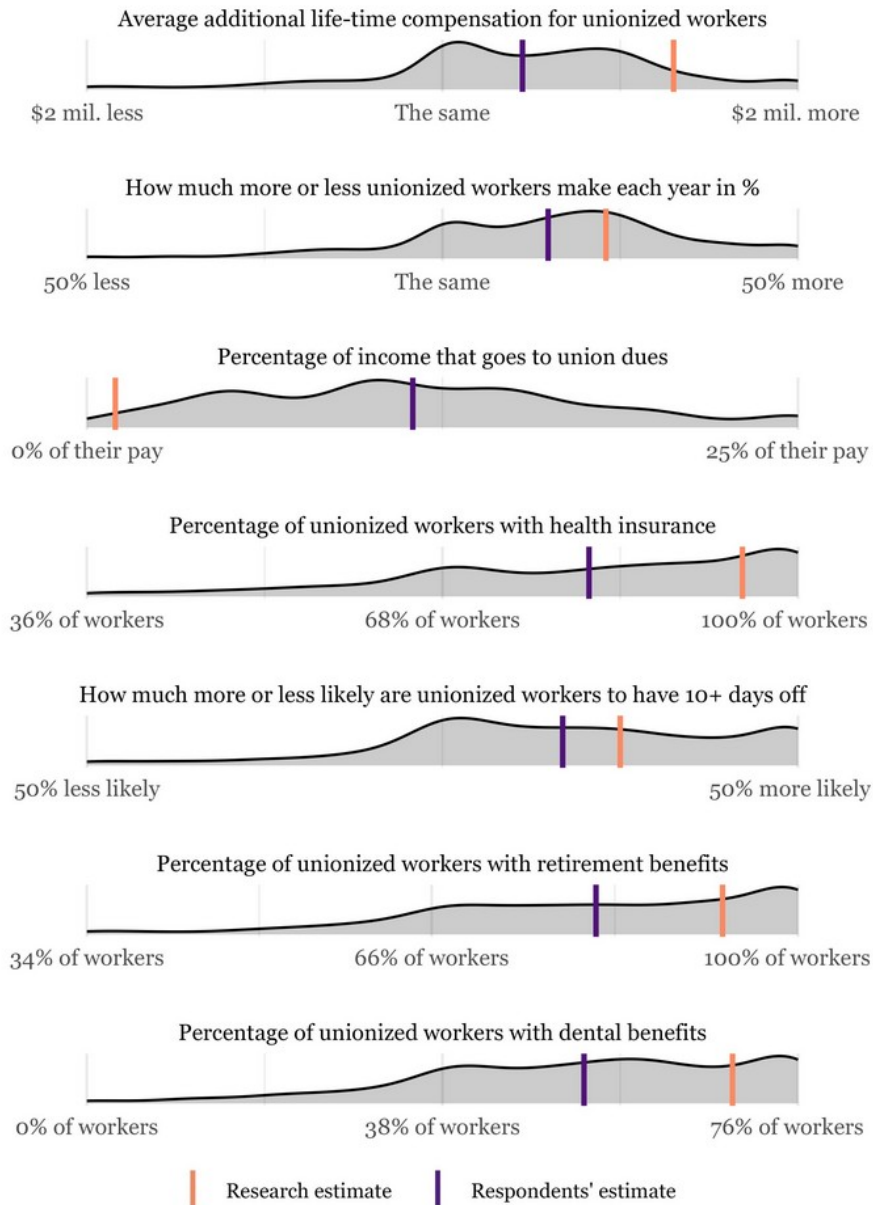
Unionized workplaces, including those in higher ed, earn higher salaries than similar, non-unionized worksites. Even after accounting for payment of union dues, unionized workers take home more pay. Unfortunately, most unionized workers don't fully appreciate the value of their union.

A [study](#) published in April 2024 by the Polarization and Social Change Lab at the Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society determined that *92% of Americans underestimate the positive impacts and material benefits of being in a union.*

“The survey found that a large majority of Americans greatly underestimate the material benefits of unions. For example:

- 89% of surveyed Americans underestimated the life-time income premium associated with union membership;
- 72% underestimated the percentage of union members who receive health insurance from their employer;
- 97% overestimated the average union dues rate (estimating it to be more than 10% of a union worker's income when it is in fact close to 1%).”

The charts below are taken from the publication. The blue lines represent respondents' perception, and the orange line represents research findings based on pay & benefits data.



Member Spotlight: **UAF's Dr. Robert Herrick**



Robert Herrick is one of only a few planetary geoscientists in the University of Alaska system and has worked as a research professor at UAF since 2004. He has made a name for himself among planetary scientists. Since UAF has not celebrated his recent accomplishments, we're doing that here.

Dr. Herrick's work appeared on a May 2024 episode of the History Channel show, *The UnXplained: Mysteries of the Universe*, hosted by William Shatner (*Star Trek's* Captain Kirk).

The episode, titled, "Earth's Evil Twin: Venus" highlighted Dr. Herrick's revolutionary analysis of old data that showed active volcanism on Venus, thus up-ending long held presumptions about the static nature of Venus's

surface (streaming info [here](#)). Herrick's work was also featured in an October 2024 PBS NOVA show called "Volcano Worlds."

These appearances on mainstream TV shows illustrate Herrick's dedication to bringing scientific understanding to the general public. More locally, this dedication to making science accessible was illustrated through Herrick's work creating a portable planetarium program that traveled statewide, and livestreaming launches at Poker Flat Research Range.

Herrick continues to conduct ground-breaking research into Venus and is well regarded among his colleagues in the planetary science realm. He is on the Science Team for two planned missions to Venus—one run by NASA and the other run by the European Space Agency with NASA contributions. His recent article in *Science* has had over 25,000 downloads. His scientific research is cutting edge, and his ability to communicate scientific ideas with the general public is a bonus that UAF should relish.

You might think that getting Captain Kirk to extol the virtues of UAF science would help one's career. That, however, has not been the case. Herrick has worked for UAF for 20 years yet has never received a single contract that lasted more than one year. Regarding his salary, he estimates that he is underpaid by at least 25% compared to what his peers at other public universities earn. He has never been given a merit bonus or a merit raise.

Herrick's work, and the funding he brings in, is essential to UAF in their quest to achieve R1 status. However, if R1 status IS achieved, Herrick's salary, and that of all UAF faculty, will suddenly be even further below peers at other R1 institutions.

UNAC in Alaska News: TWICE

A recent Alaska Beacon [op-ed](#) by Jennie Carroll, UAF Associate Professor and chair of UA Faculty Alliance, exhibits the type of leadership we need from you right now.

Use this article as inspiration and join Jennie by sending your local newspaper or the Alaska Beacon an opinion piece or letter to the editor.

Contact your Org VP or office staff for help editing.

This [article](#) in the *Fairbanks Daily Newsminer* does a good job of summarizing our current situation, with quotes from UNAC President Jill Dumesnil and UA spokesperson Jonathan Taylor.

The article makes clear that UA is, in fact, including every single UA employee in their cost analysis of our compensation proposal rather than the cost for solely our bargaining unit. We can only bargain for the people in our unit, not for non-represented staff or management or anyone in other bargaining units.

Faculty Time Off (FTO) & Hard Closure

Everyone is required to take FTO during the "hard closure" days of December 26, 27, and 30 in order to be eligible to cash-in up to 5 FTO days. If you are required to work during hard closure, contact us at contract@unac4996ak.com and we will make sure an exception is made for your situation.

In total, you have fifteen days of FTO per academic year, with additional FTO earned for work beyond nine months per year. After you claim at least five personal days of FTO, you can cash in up to five days of FTO in lieu of days off. That's money into your pocket! Fill out the FTO cash-in form and go here for more information. We recommend cashing in five days and claiming the other ten as days off. Let's make full use of our FTO this year!

When you take time off using your FTO, your pay for your day off comes from the system office instead of from your department's budget. When you take FTO as a personal day off, you are helping your department's budget, *and* you are helping your work life balance. If you can't manage to take any FTO throughout the entire year, please contact your union Org VP to talk about your workload.

Ongoing Actions

While your negotiation team waits for mediation, *you need to make your support known* by participating in all of the following actions. Now is the time to show our solidarity and our resolve.

Do YOU need a fair contract with competitive wages? This is the way. Participate in these actions to help your negotiation team in mediation.

- Participate in our [UNAC Member Testimony](#) campaign for a fair contract by completing the linked form
- Wear red every Monday
- Use our [Zoom profile pictures](#) and background images for work meetings.
- Share our social media content
 - [Facebook](#)
 - [Instagram](#)
 - [Bluesky](#)
- Hang an "I support UNAC" sign on your office door & send a photo to membership@unac4996ak.com
- Write to our Board of Regents (use these [talking points](#) with email contacts)
- Ask your colleagues to fill out the member testimony form and hang a sign on their office door

“Juneau's cost of living is 27% higher than the rest of the Nation. I would love to continue living and working in Southeast, but it is a very expensive place to live.”

-Judith Daxootsú Ramos

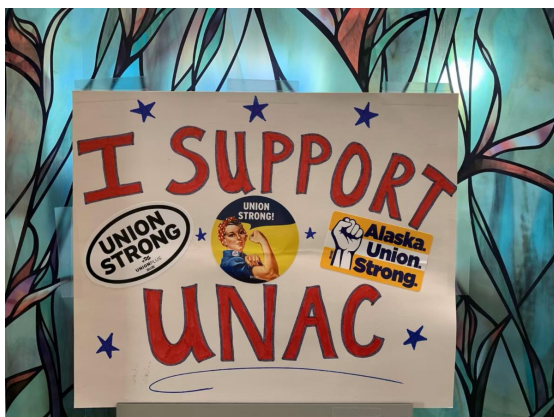
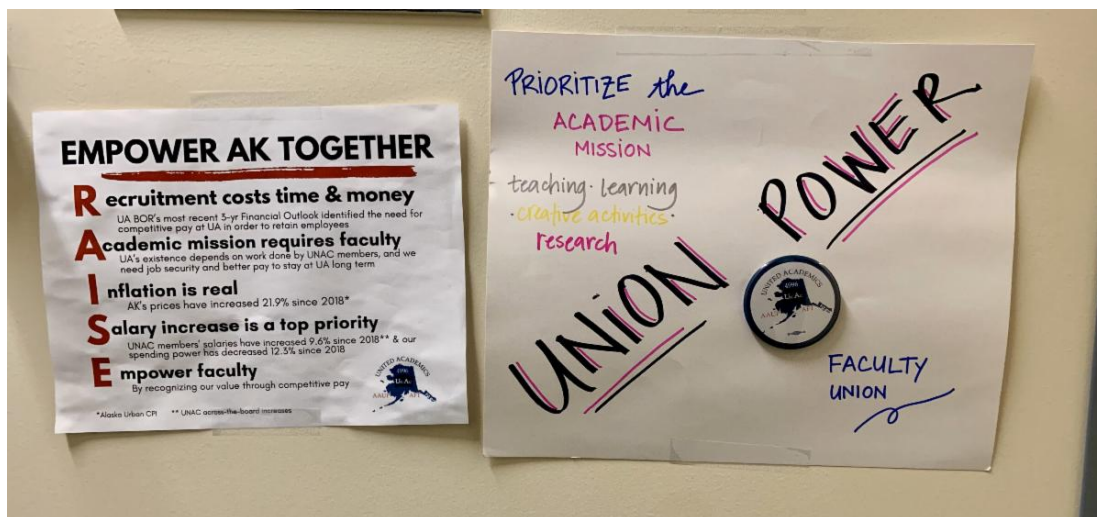
UAS Assistant Professor of Northwest Coast Arts



#empowerAKtogether



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Strike Solidarity Corner

- **BREAKING NEWS:** on 12/17/2024 Starbucks Workers United (SBWU) members voted with 98% approval to *authorize a nationwide Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) Strike* if a deal is not reached imminently. The union represents

over 10,000 baristas in over 500 stores nationwide and is bargaining for higher wages, increased staffing, and improvements to scheduling. (more [here](#) and [here](#))

- 1,700+ graduate workers at Oregon State University were on strike from November 12 to December 6, 2024, when they reached a Tentative Agreement (TA) and called off the strike. They were on strike for higher wages and a reasonable contract length, both of which they won. (more [here](#); video picketing outside a football game [here](#))
- 700 hospitality workers for Virgin Las Vegas have been on strike for 22 days and counting and urge visitors to honor their picket line by staying at non-Virgin Las Vegas properties until their contract is settled. (more [here](#))
- Employees at NYC's Strand Bookstore went on strike for the first time in their union's 30-year history. They won wage increases amounting to 37% over 4 years for their lowest paid employees. (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- 1-day general strike in Italy called by Italy's national unions to fight low wages. (more [here](#))
- Not a strike, but a Wisconsin judge has overturned a 2010 state law barring collective bargaining for public employees. The 2010 law kneecapped unions' ability to protect working conditions, and Wisconsin's public servants have paid the price. This will work its way through the appeals process, potentially reaching the U.S. Supreme Court. (more [here](#))

Reminders

UNAC Website

Please visit our United Academics website: 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

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

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>

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.

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, January 14, 2025, from 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.

jill.dumesnil@unac4996ak.com

Treasurer - Sharon Chamard, Ph.D.

sharon.chamard@unac4996ak.com

Secretary - Abel Bult-Ito, Ph.D.

abel.bult.ito@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 - Douglas Cost, Ph.D.

doug.cost@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).

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

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