



UNAC Connection - March 2025



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Faculty Spotlight



Dr. X'unei Lance Twitchell

Dr. X'unei Lance Twitchell, UAS Professor of Alaska Native Languages, won an **Emmy award** for Outstanding Writing for a Preschool Animated Series on March 16, 2025. Twitchell writes scripts for Molly of Denali, a PBS Kids show that airs nationwide every weekday.

The winning episode, "Not a Mascot," focused on the main character helping an Alaskan basketball team change their stereotypical Indigenous mascot to a new, non-discriminatory mascot. The plot of the show parallels Twitchell's daily work to fight stereotypes and bigotry against Indigenous peoples and ways of being in Alaska and the UA system. His focus at UAS and in Southeast Alaska is the preservation and revitalization of Alaska Native languages and cultures. He deserves all the recognition he's gotten for his Emmy Award!

UAF's New Organizational Vice President: Ingrid Johnson



Congratulations to Dr. Ingrid Johnson, who won the recent special election to replace our previous UAF Org VP, who is now dean of UAF's School of Education. Ingrid's role will continue through the rest of the VP term, which ends on June 30, 2027.

Thanks also to Art Nash, who also ran for the position and will continue serving in his role on the UNAC Representative Assembly. Our next regularly scheduled elections will take place next winter (early 2026) for president, secretary, and treasurer.

UNAC's Petition to the UA BOR Regarding Their Anti-DEI Motion

356 UNAC members signed our [petition](#) in under one week. Thank you to everyone who signed it! This is the type of solidarity we need to show right now. We delivered the petition to members of the BOR on Monday, March 10, 2025, and have heard no response. We encourage you to engage with media in interviews when asked to do so, and to continue pressuring the regents to reconsider this motion. In the end, it will not protect UA from whatever is coming next out of D.C.



Anti-DEI Policy Compliance

If a UA employee other than your direct supervisor tells you to change language or content on any of your print or virtual materials, including course offerings and websites, you are not required to comply.

You cannot be accused of insubordination, which is a fireable offense, unless the order comes directly from your supervisor. If your supervisor orders you to make changes, immediately contact your union at contract@unac4996ak.com for advice before responding or complying.

President Pitney said in her March 17, 2025, [email](#) regarding compliance with the BOR's DEI policy that they were not touching academic programs. With that in mind, you should not hesitate to get in touch with your union if your academic program is being pressured to make any type of changes.

Federal Funding Threats

- Is your funding under threat or frozen? Our national affiliate, AAUP, is gathering information about impacts to funding across the nation. If your funding has been frozen, pulled, or denied,
- Plan a rally in your area for the next National Day of Action on Biomedical Research on April 8, 2025 ([Kill The Cuts](#)). Tell your Org VP and our office staff (membership@unac4996ak.com)

please fill out [this form](#) for use by AAUP's legal team. Please also contact your Org VP to let them know of your situation (contacts at bottom of page).

what you're planning and we'll help you advertise! Stay tuned for details soon.

Know Your Union Rights to Representation

If your supervisor calls you into a meeting, request an agenda for the meeting. If no agenda is provided, we recommend you tell them you will bring a union representative with you to the meeting. Then contact your Org VP and our union office at contract.unac4996ak.com. Your supervisor is legally required to schedule the meeting at a time when your union representative is available. *This is called your Weingarten Rights.* Watch the video below for more details.



If you have a work situation that you're not sure how to deal with, your UNAC Org VP is a good first person to talk with. They're bound by confidentiality and will help you to the best of their abilities. The video below gives a few examples of when to contact your union.



Workloads

While your dean or director ultimately sets your workload, they are required to use the workload you submitted to them as a starting point and should meet with you to discuss any changes before making them. Past precedent matters, meaning the number of workload units you have historically gotten for an activity on your workload should not change unless your role in that activity changes (ex: chairing a committee vs. being a committee member).

It is in your best interest to be familiar with Article 13: Workloads, in our [CBA](#) so you know your rights. We also encourage you to share and compare your workload with your colleagues; transparency helps create equity. We do vastly different types of work across the system, but the amount of work we do should be equitable (oops is that a banned word?)

Faculty Regent Bill Update



(Above: UAS faculty members Jennifer Ward and Brian Blitz presented on the importance of adding a faculty regent to the BOR on February 20, 2025. [link below](#))

The Alaska Legislature is considering bills to add a faculty member to the UA Board of Regents. The House Bill ([HB10](#)), will be scheduled in the House Finance Committee for amendments and a vote on whether to pass the bill to the full House for a final, floor vote. The Senate Bill ([SB118](#)) had its first hearing in the Senate Education Committee on March 26, 2025, at 3:30 pm. To become law, both bills have to pass through their respective committees and then pass a floor vote by each body before passing a vote of the full legislature and being signed (not vetoed) by the governor.

HB10 is sponsored by Representative Ashley Carrick (Fairbanks), Representative Zach Fields (Anchorage) and Representative Ky Holland (Anchorage)

SB118 is sponsored by the Senate State Affairs Committee. The committee decided to sponsor this bill following a [presentation to the committee](#) by UAS's Faculty Senate President, Brian Blitz, and former President/Faculty Alliance Chair, Jennifer Ward.

Check Your Biweekly Paystubs

Sometimes the UA payroll department makes a mistake. It's up to you to catch those mistakes. The biweekly email from ua-webpay@alaska.edu announcing that your pay information is available is a good reminder to *check your paystub for accuracy*. Make sure your union dues are being deducted if you're a dues payer ([join here](#) if you're not); make sure your leave accrual is correct; make sure you're in the correct healthcare plan. If you don't notice mistakes in a timely manner, it is much more difficult or impossible to correct them. If you DO notice a mistake, contact us at contract@unac4996ak.com for advice on your next steps.

Use Your Faculty Time Off or Cash-In up to Five Days

To use your Faculty Time Off (FTO), claim it on your timesheet for the appropriate dates.

To cash in up to 5 days of your FTO in lieu of taking time off, fill out the [FTO Cash-In form](#).

Strike Solidarity Corner

- 1,800+ faculty at the University of Oregon voted to authorize a strike, with 89% of their members voting and 92% voting yes. Their union is one of several other United Academics chapters throughout the US; we can learn a lot from them! They've set March 31, 2025, as their strike date. ([more here](#))
- 4,000 student workers at the University of Oregon also voted to authorize a strike, with 60% of the unit voting, with 94.5% of voters authorizing a strike. They are negotiating their first contract with UO. ([more here](#))
- 1,200 faculty and staff at the Philadelphia Community College voted to authorize a strike, with 90% of the unit voting; 97% voted to authorize a strike. ([more here](#))

- A 24-hour, nationwide strike in Panama was called by construction and teachers unions in response to unfavorable changes to the country's social security law. ([more here](#))
 - There are calls for a General Strike in the US. What would this look like? [This website](#) may be of interest.
 - Strikes are not a new invention. Peruse [this Wikipedia page](#) for a long list of historical strikes dating back to BCE.
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Actions

- Check AAUP's [upcoming events](#) page regularly.
- April 8, 2025: National Day of Action to support biomedical research. Stay tuned for local details.
- April 17, 2025: National Day of Action for higher education
 - **UNAC Virtual Teach-In** on 4 relevant current events with panelists from around the UA system. 1-3 p.m. on Zoom
 - [Register here](#)

TODAY:

- Friday, March 28, 2025: UNAC goes to the theatre (UAF/Fairbanks)
 - RSVP to kate.quick@unac4996ak.com by noon 3/28 if you want pizza at the Pub
 - Details in the flyer

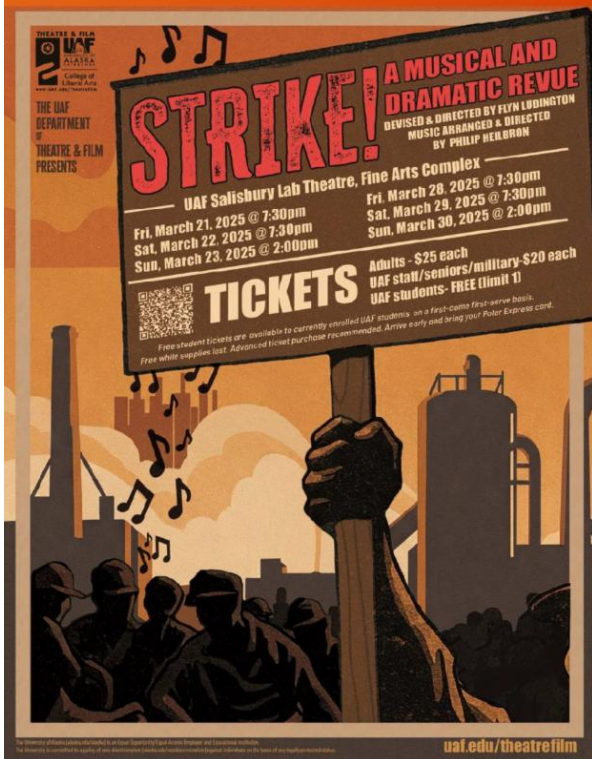
UNAC Goes to the Theatre!

Friday, March 28, 2025

Join your UAF faculty colleagues for an evening of union-themed comradery and support UAF arts!

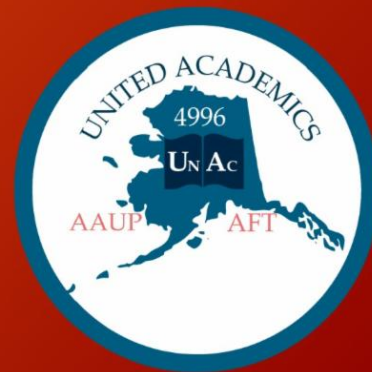
5 PM - 7 PM: Meet at the Pub for pizza and beer.

7 PM: Meet at the Fine Arts Complex to claim our seats at *STRIKE! A Musical and Dramatic Revue*.



Please buy your tickets to *STRIKE!* in advance to guarantee your seat.

UNAC will provide pizza. Please RSVP to kate.quick@unac4996ak.com by Friday at noon so that we know how much pizza to bring!



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, April 8, 2025, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. AKDT

Next UNAC Representative Assembly Meeting*

Saturday, April 12, 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.*

Reminders

UNAC Website

Please visit our United Academics website: 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

Treasurer - Sharon Chamard, Ph.D.
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Secretary - Abel Bult-Ito, Ph.D.
abel.bult.ito@unac4996ak.com

UAA Organizational VP - Ryan Harrod, Ph.D.
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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

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