



UNAC Connection - December 2025



- Contract Enforcement & Member Support
- What's a Union Worth?
- UAA COH Non-Tenure Track Listening Session
- Faculty Time Off (FTO)
- UNAC Leadership Opportunities
- Higher Ed in the News
- Strike Solidarity Corner
- Union Resources
- Reminders

Contract Enforcement & Member Support

UNAC membership support includes actions like enforcing contract language and assisting members during investigations and meetings with supervisors. Members always have the right to consult with UNAC about workplace matters, and we encourage members to request union representation for any meeting of consequence. (See [this video](#) for details).

Here are some examples of membership support UNAC leadership and staff have provided over the past year:

- **Assistance with disciplinary investigations:** We help members organize their responses to any allegations and accompany them to any meetings or hearings. These are often quite stressful so we're also here to listen and offer moral support.
- **Assistance with supervisors' Letters of Expectation:** We advocate for members by insisting on accurate information, and we accompany them to meetings as requested. Our contract stipulates that these letters can only remain in employee files for one year.
- **Good faith placement for tenured faculty affected by program closures.**

Our goal is always a swift and fair outcome for members. However, sometimes we have to defend our contract through the *grievance process*. Recent examples of grievances include:

- **Issues with payment, like overloads and department chair stipends.**
- **Health care arrears crossing fiscal years**, leaving debt balances for faculty without summer contracts. In this case we achieved a settlement whereby members will not have coverage retroactively denied if they leave mid-summer.
- **Erroneous claim by a Labor Relations investigator that UA can provide a faculty member's course materials for other faculty members to use without permission or attribution.**

Active union membership throughout our bargaining unit is vital for winning a fair contract and making sure that the University follows our contract. Your **membership dues** support our contract manager and our organizing manager and make it possible for elected representatives to assist fellow members during investigations and other meetings. *Don't wait to reach out if you think you need assistance.*

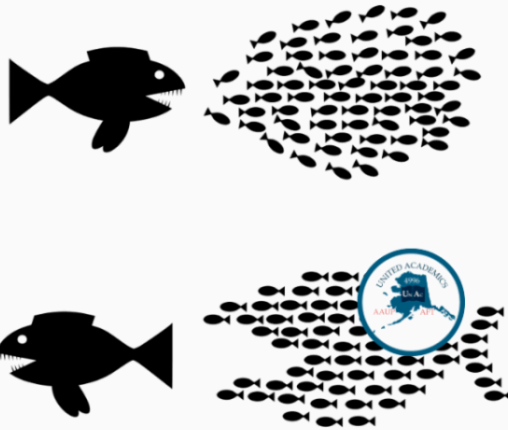
UPDATE YOUR PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Help UNAC and our national affiliate, AAUP, contact you without using your @alaska.edu email address. Fill out [this brief form](#) to help us update our records of your personal contact information. This will ensure that you don't miss important information from UNAC or AAUP that can't be distributed to @alaska.edu addresses.

What's a Union Worth?

A **2016 study** conducted by professors at multiple Alabama universities found that unionized faculty at public regional universities earn approximately \$21k more per year, including benefits, than non-unionized faculty. This is true in Alaska, too, where professors at Alaska Public University and Illisagvik College earn significantly less than UA faculty, on average. Union dues are expensive, but the evidence is clear: dues more than pay for themselves.

Here at UA, dues pay for CBA negotiation and enforcement, among other things. The CBA is the only reason we still have UNAC Professional Development Funds for use by our bargaining unit members; that money is detailed in our CBA and therefore administrators cannot take that pot of money to pay other bills, as has slowly happened with other pots of money intended for professional development. This is just one example of our CBA paying off for you. UA faculty would be worse off in pay, professional development, and workplace protections without a union.



UAA COH Listening Session for Non-Tenure Track Members

On December 18, 2025, at 9:30 in the morning, UNAC leaders and non-tenure track members of UAA's College of Health will meet for a listening session to discuss their concerns and brainstorm solutions in an open and supportive environment.

COH NTT faculty received an invite to this event via email. Questions? Contact membership@unac4996ak.com



FTO Benefits & Requirements

Claiming Your FTO Puts Money Back in Your Department's or Campus's Budget

When you log onto UA Online to access your timesheets and claim days of FTO, your pay for those days comes from a 'time off' benefit account in UA Statewide, whereas your normal pay comes out of your department's budget or your grant. It's a win-win; you get time off to relax, and your department or grant saves a day of your wages to be spent on something else.

If you are new to UA, ask your supervisor to help you navigate UA Online and claim your FTO.

Notify Your Supervisor When Claiming FTO

Even if classes are not in session, you should notify your supervisor (dean or campus/institute director) to tell them the dates for which you plan to claim FTO. If you need to take FTO when classes are in session or you are scheduled for field work, it is essential to get your supervisor's approval, in writing, ahead of time.

UNAC Leadership Opportunities

2027-28 Negotiation Team

Team nominations are happening now, ahead of next year's workload due dates. Selected members will start training and strategizing next July and throughout the next academic year. Negotiations will begin mid-2027. Team members will need to take release time of 3 workload units per semester (paid to your university by UNAC to cover replacement costs) for at least 3 semesters.

Nominating yourself for this team is one of the best ways to give back and pay it forward. You're building off what previous faculty-led teams have bargained, with the goal to protect and improve our compensation, job security, and working conditions for future faculty. Nominate yourself before January 15, 2025!

Dues payers in good standing received the nomination form via email on Monday, November 17, 2025.

Statewide Officer Elections

Nominations opened on December 15, 2025, for the officer positions President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These positions represent all 1,100+ faculty and post-doctoral fellows in the UNAC bargaining unit. All dues paying members in good standing are eligible to run for election and vote this spring.

Nominating yourself for one of these positions is another great way to give back and pay it forward. These positions are less public than the negotiation team but are equally or more important. If you care about our profession and higher education, and want to see working conditions improve, one of these positions is right for you! Nominations close January 12, 2026.

Dues payers in good standing received the nomination form via email on December 15, 2025. Nominees are required to gather 10+ endorsements by no later than January 12, 2026

We'll send reminders before nominations close on January 15, 2026.

Review [these slides](#) for more details on this opportunity.

(instructions will be included in the announcement).

Review [these slides](#) for more details about these positions.

Higher Education in the News

- Visit AAUP's [litigation tracker page](#) for updates on their myriad court cases defending research funding, rights to privacy, academic freedom and free speech, and more.
- University of Pennsylvania refused to comply with a federal request that they *send the government the names and personal contact information for Jewish students and employees* involved with certain U-Penn organizations and departments. ([more here](#))
- Research funding for university scientists across the U.S. has seen a dramatic shakeup of the 80+ year agreement between the federal government and research institutions, in which federal grants and contracts funded groundbreaking, life-changing research and propelled the careers of countless researchers. Approximately 15% or more of our bargaining unit is keenly aware of these circumstances. AAUP and AFT have fought in court to protect current funding, but the future of research funding is uncertain until Congress passes FY26 agency budgets. ([more here](#))

Strike Solidarity Corner

Unionized workers from varied occupations have been going on strike against their employers. Their occupations vary, but one thing remains the same. They are all demanding respect in the form of higher pay, better benefits, and improved working conditions.

- 37,000 unionized UCLA workers in dining halls, custodial services, and patient support went on a two-day strike in mid-November and continue to bargain for a fair contract. They are seeking fair wages, housing benefits, affordable healthcare, and job security. ([more here](#) and [here](#)).
 - 135 unionized nurse practitioners, physicians' associates, certified nurse midwives, and clinical nurse specialists in Portland, Oregon, went on strike on December 2, 2025, after trying for nearly two years to bargain their first contract with their employer, Legacy. They are fighting to protect patients through competitive recruitment and retention policies, and to put an end to the common practice of unpaid work. ([more here](#))
 - Unionized museum staff at France's Louvre voted unanimously to go on strike starting Monday, December 15, in response to unsafe and deteriorating facilities, perennial understaffing, and lack of adequate museum security. ([more here](#))
 - For nearly one month, Starbucks workers at 145 stores in more than 100 cities (and growing) have been on strike for fair wages and better staffing/scheduling practices. These workers have been negotiating their first contract with Starbucks for FOUR YEARS. Starbucks corporate office has yet to offer any reasonable compromise to the striking baristas. ***Until Starbucks offers their workers a contract they can accept, you can help the baristas by buying your coffee and treats elsewhere!*** ([more here](#) and [here](#))
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Union Resources

- This source is a treasure-trove of material on collective bargaining in higher education across the U.S., including access to 92 other CBAs - [Hunter-CUNY's National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions 2024 Directory](#).
 - [AAUP's 2024-25 Interactive Data Tables on U.S. faculty salaries and job security](#)
 - [AAUP AFT- Higher Ed Benefits Everyone](#)
 - [Protecting Your Online Presence in the Current Climate](#)
 - [AFT Mental Health Resources](#) and [Trauma Counseling](#)
 - [Member Benefits](#) and [Occupational Liability Insurance](#)
 - [Faculty First Responders](#)
 - [Mobilize AFT](#) and [AFT Votes-Government Shutdown Watch](#)
 - [Union Plus Benefits](#)
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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, January 13, 2026, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. AKST

Next UNAC Representative Assembly Meeting*

Saturday, February 21, 2026, 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.*

Reminders

UNAC Swag Store

Looking for something new to wear to work? Need a new coffee mug or a new canvas bag? Shop at our [new United Academics store](#) on Bonfire to find the perfect item for you. A small portion of the proceeds goes back to UNAC, and we'll use the proceeds to purchase more free swag for our members. You can select from items with our classic logo or our new, updated logo.



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>

***This newsletter is brought to you by dues paying UNAC members.
Thank you for paying your union dues!***



Executive Board Contacts

President - Jill Dumesnil, PhD

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Secretary - Richie Berndt, MSML

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United Academics Local #4996 (UNAC) is the bargaining unit that represents post doctoral fellows, non-tenure track, tenure track, and tenured faculty at the University of Alaska. UNAC is an affiliate of the American Association of University Professors

(AAUP), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the Alaska Public Employees Association (APEA).

unitedacademicsak.org

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