



UNAC Connection - October 2025



Your Dues & National Affiliates
Health Plan Arrears Arbitration
12 Month Pay for 9 Month
Employees
Unum & FML
Multi-Union Petition to UA BOR
BOR Public Testimony
RA Actions
Reframing Academic Freedom
Union Resources
Anchorage Action Alert
Higher Ed in the News
Strike Solidarity Corner
Reminders

Your Dues and Our National Affiliates' Actions

We've been asked, "what can UNAC actually do to protect its members in a time like this?" The question was in reference to the past ten months of frozen, rescinded, sometimes reinstated, and uncertain federal research funding. Here's the truth: UNAC, as a lone non-profit union of 1,100 UA faculty and postdocs, can't do a lot on the national scale. That's why we are affiliated with state and national unions whose sole purpose is to amplify the common needs of their Locals' memberships.

We are one of dozens of higher education unions affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Nearly 500,000 faculty nationwide are unionized and paying dues. Approximately 30% of your UNAC dues flows directly through UNAC to AAUP and AFT national headquarters. That money is funding AFT and AAUP's numerous court cases challenging the legality of recent federal Executive Orders. AFT and AAUP have won court case after court case, defending your rights to the funding you've secured and your rights to free speech at the workplace. They led the case against

the recent banning of diversity, equity, and inclusion on college campuses and WON! Yes, it will be appealed, but they are fighting for your legal rights every day.

If you haven't previously been sure whether paying your union dues is worth it, these court cases show that your union dues DO protect your jobs, your academic freedom, and your constitutional rights. [Sign up to pay dues](#) today if you're not already.

Health Plan Arrears Settlement

At the advice of our legal team, we settled our arrears grievance shortly before arbitration was set to begin. The settlement guarantees that any member who departs while owing arrears will not retroactively lose their health care and be on the hook for any medical bills accrued during the arrears period. Unfortunately, the settlement does not resolve the problem of arrears collection for our returning members enrolled in UA's health plan.

12-Month Pay Option for Faculty on 9-Month Contracts

We continue to push for the obvious solution to health care arrears: giving 9-month employees the option to spread their pay over 12 months. While we push for this option in meetings, YOU collectively must also push. Make your voice heard on this topic! Write letters to the editor and to UA's regents, talk with your administrators about it, pass departmental or college-level resolutions supporting it, and call in to the Board of Regents public testimony hour to testify in support of it. 9-month employees need the option to spread pay over 12 months.



Unum is Out; Family Medical Leave (FML) is Back In-House

Thanks to each person who made clear to UA HR their dissatisfaction with Unum, UA is no longer outsourcing the work of ensuring you receive your legally protected leave.

Multi-Union Petition telling UA's BOR: Reject the Federal Compact!

You have until noon on Monday, November 3, 2025, to sign our petition, co-sponsored by AGWA/UAW (graduate workers' union), UNAD AFT/AAUP (adjunct union), and CAUSE/UAW (newly forming staff union). The [federal](#)

[compact](#) would, in theory, offer preferential research and other funding to institutions who sign it.

However, signing the document would destroy academic freedom by taking away your rights to create assignments and assign grades, follow ground-breaking research inquiries, and lead provocative public art productions or shows. The compact would remove processes currently performed through shared governance and place them under federal oversight.

If you haven't signed yet, click the red button below: tell our Board of Regents not to be tempted. Tell them not to sign the compact.

SIGN THE PETITION



**United
Academics
Adjuncts
Local 6054**



BOR Public Testimony- Potential Testimony Topics

- Tell them to maintain UA's academic excellence by refusing to sign the federal compact for higher ed.
- If you don't get paid over the summer, tell them the hardships this creates for you, and how the option to spread your pay over 12 months would help.
- Tell them about the great work you or your students are doing.

**Testimony must be two minutes or less. Write notes or a script and practice ahead of time.*

UA BOARD OF REGENTS PUBLIC TESTIMONY HOUR



Get in the queue by 4 pm AKT



Monday, Nov. 3, 2025



4:00-5:00 pm AKT



1-800-717-1738



UNAC Representative Assembly (RA) Actions

UNAC's RA met via Zoom on Saturday, October 18, 2025, and passed the following action items.

1. Signed a group letter to our DC delegation in support of fully funding the federal agencies that hundreds of our members rely on for grants and contracts to do their important work.
2. Approved a plan from the Legislative Relations Committee to start a preemptive petition telling the UA Board of Regents not to sign the new federal compact (see above--petition is now live)
3. Approved Ambra Macmillan's application to fill an empty UAA seat on the RA

**We have THREE UAF Troth Yeddha' Campus seats open on the RA. Interested dues paying members should contact Org VP Ingrid Johnson at ingrid.johnson@unac4996ak.com.*

Reframing Academic Freedom

In her recent report, [The Role of Faculty Unions](#), Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), called us all to action to reframe academic freedom:

"If we are to stem the continued erosion of academic freedom, we have to think about it in a different way.

The challenge I am laying out is for us to open up the aperture. To frame academic freedom so it is explicitly clear that it involves the rights of students to learn and the rights of citizens to be informed. The right for communities to have a better future—not just intellectually, but economically...

We must demonstrate the *direct connection of community and economic well-being to the purposes of higher education*—advancing knowledge, fostering social mobility, creating opportunity, and benefiting society. If our argument for academic freedom is that it is only about the freedom of an elite few, it will fail.”

Under Investigation? Call UNAC!

UA's office of Labor Relations is supposed to notify us anytime one of our bargaining unit members is under *any type of investigation*. It has come to our attention that this is not always happening. If you are notified that a student or staff member has filed a complaint with HR or the Office of Civil Rights against you, you have the right to union representation. We will make sure processes are followed and you are not unfairly targeted. Email contract@unac4996ak.com and your UNAC Org VP for help if this applies to you.

(video: When to call UNAC)



Union Resources

- [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](#)
-

Anchorage Action Alert



UNAC @ THE BOR

Show our regents we care about their stewardship of our University!

 **Friday 11/7/2025**

 **9:00 am**

 **Gorsuch Commons**

WEAR RED!

 More Information:
membership@unac4996ak.com



Higher Education in the News

- [Seven Million Turn Out for “No Kings” Protests Nationwide. Next Up, Massive Disruptions Backed by Unions?](#) – *In These Times*, 10.20.25 (AAUP Rutgers President Rebecca Givan quoted)
- Gender is not an ideology – but conservative groups know learning about it empowers people to think – *The Conversation*, 10.22.25 ([AAUP Texas 9.26.25 statement](#) quoted)
- [No, the AAUP Is Not Opposing Reform](#) – *Inside Higher Ed*, 10.21.25 (op ed by AAUP member John K. Wilson)
- [University of Arizona latest to turn down Trump’s policy demands](#) – *Al Jazeera*, 10.21.25 (quotes AAUP/AFT statement)
- [How the Compact Curtails Academic Freedom](#) – *Inside Higher Ed*, 10.23.25
- [Amid Trump’s Assault on Higher Ed and DEI, Free Speech Advocates Stay Busy](#) – *Inside Higher Ed*, 10.23.25

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.

- Thousands of Kaiser Permanente nurses and other healthcare workers at more than 500 hospitals in California, Oregon, and Hawaii went on a limited, five-day strike and returned to work while negotiations continue. ([more here](#))
 - Over 50,000 Broadway actors reached a tentative agreement (TA) with their managers, but musicians are still threatening to strike. Issues at stake include healthcare, scheduling, and physical therapy. ([more here](#))
 - Vermont dairy plant workers ended a successful two-week strike with a TA'd contract that gives them approximately 14.5% pay increase over 22 months, the right to decline overtime without punishment, and increases to management healthcare and retirement contributions ([more here](#))
-

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 11, 2025, 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

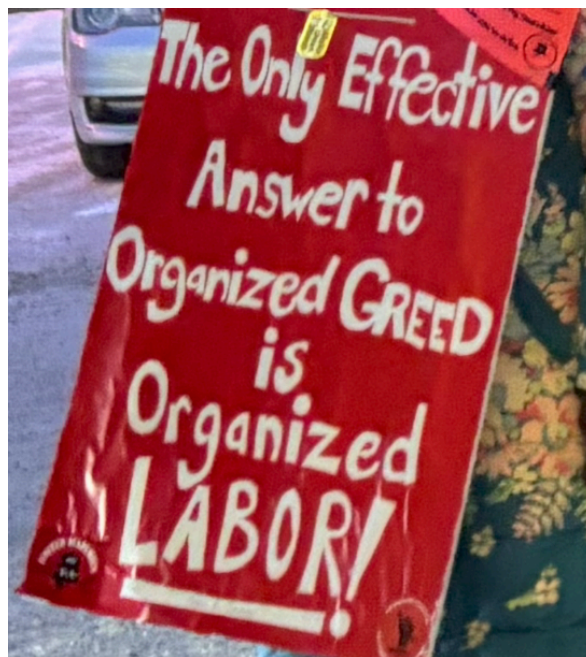
The Sick Leave Bank application can be found under 'forms and guidelines' on this [UA Labor and Employee Relations](#) webpage.

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>



Executive Board Contacts

President - Jill Dumesnil, PhD

jill.dumesnil@unac4996ak.com

Treasurer - Sharon Chamard, PhD

sharon.chamard@unac4996ak.com

Secretary - Richie Berndt, MSML

richie.berndt@unac4996ak.com

UAA Organizational VP - Ryan Harrod, PhD

ryan.harrod@unac4996ak.com

UAS Organizational VP - Andrea Dewees, PhD

andrea.dewees@unac4996ak.com

UAF Organizational VP - Ingrid Johnson, PhD

ingrid.johnson@unac4996ak.com

Extended Sites Organizational VP - Cindy Trussell, PhD

cindy.trussell@unac4996ak.com

Contract Manager - Melanie Arthur, PhD

melanie.arthur@unac4996ak.com

Organizing Manager - Kate Quick, MFA

kate.quick@unac4996ak.com

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).

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

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!