



UNAC Connection - September 2025



- Health Plan Arrears Arbitration
- UNAC Professional Development Funds
- Travel Paperwork
- Academic Freedom in 2025
- Online Safety
- Title III Funding for UA Native Serving Institutions
- Kill the Cuts to Research
- NTT vs Term
- Higher Ed in the News
- Strike Solidarity Corner
- Reminders

Check Your Paystubs for Health Plan Arrears

All returning health plan participants should review the [special announcement](#) we sent on September 11, 2025, regarding erroneous health plan arrears deductions. It's in your best interest to review our announcement and then review your deductions if you haven't already. Contact us at contract@unac4996ak.com

One obvious solution for management to avoid arbitration and settle this mess is to offer employees with partial or no summer contract extensions *the option to be paid evenly over 12 months*. HR has indicated the in-progress Banner upgrade may make this possible. Meanwhile, the arbitration is set to take place in mid-October.

UNAC Professional Development Funds Are Open

As departmental Fund 1 travel budgets become ever more elusive, our UNAC Professional Development Funds have become a primary resource for UNAC's

bargaining unit members. Back in 2016, our Negotiation Team won the inclusion of these professional development funds in our [CBA](#) (article 15.9).

Our CBA is the reason you continue to have access to these funds. All bargaining unit members of every job title are eligible for these funds. Each MAU's Provost Office manages the application process; contact them or your Org-VP for specific assistance.

UA Travel Paperwork Requirements



UA now requires that you submit travel paperwork in advance anytime that you are traveling for work - even if the university is not contributing to the cost of the travel. Also be aware that anytime you are traveling out of the U.S. with your work computer or other work equipment, even if you have taken time off or are funding your own travel, you need to complete additional paperwork. Failure to do so has resulted in disciplinary actions against some of our members. Save yourself the headache and fill out the paperwork before travel if you are taking UA equipment with you, even if your travel is not UA funded. Visit this [UA Travel](#) website for more information.

Academic Freedom in 2025

A video circulated earlier this fall showing a Texas A&M instructor being secretly recorded by a student who challenged the day's topic of discussion, ultimately taking the video to the school's president and getting the instructor fired and the dean and department chair demoted. The president stepped down shortly after ([more here](#)). These are scary times.

One difference to keep in mind between Texas A&M and the UA system is their faculty don't have a union or a CBA. Texas doesn't allow collective bargaining; Alaska is a strong union state. Article 6 of our CBA protects academic freedom, guaranteeing every bargaining unit members' right to teach, research, and create according to the norms and latest innovations or discoveries in the discipline without fear of retaliation or job loss. This protection is more valuable today than in recent history.

AFT's page, [academic freedom and campus free speech](#), has a lot of great resources to review.

Online Safety in 2025

Now is a good time to review your social media settings and your online profile. Read the following guide from AAUP and Faculty First Responders: [Strategies to Protect Yourself Online in the Current Climate](#).



Title III Funding for UA's Native Serving Institutions

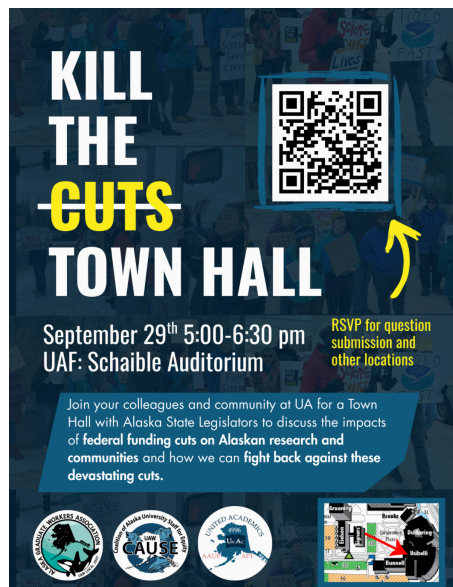
It appears that the BOR's February actions to eliminate DEI language and personnel did not save UA from losing millions of federal dollars overnight

after the Federal Department of Education [cancelled already approved grants](#) for Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions.

This funding directly employed some of our members and UA staff and supported hundreds of students to foster success among Alaska Native students, buoying all student experiences in the process. Consider writing to our federal delegation on this topic (contact info in our letter writing campaign below). They voted to appropriate the money and now it's been cut, to the detriment of Alaskans and the UA system.

Kill the Cuts to Protect Federal Funding

The Federal funding threats are coming from every direction this fall. In anticipation of Congress's upcoming votes on spending budgets, UNAC is co-hosting a Kill the Cuts Town Hall with the graduate student union, AGWA/UAW, and the new staff organization, CAUSE/UAW. Members in Fairbanks are encouraged to attend in person at Schaible Auditorium; a Zoom link will be available for remote viewing. [RSVP here](#). Download the flyer and print a copy for your office door and your public bulletin boards.



UAA Watching Room:
Rasmuson Hall 101

UAS Watching Room:
Auke View Conference Room in the Hendrickson Annex (SOE dean's office)

UNAC's Letter Writing Campaign

In addition to the town hall, we are participating in a national AAUP/AFT letter writing campaign with the same goal: maintain or increase federal funding to support UA research and UA's mission.

If you haven't sent letters to our DC Delegation on the topic of cuts to research funding, do it before the end of September. We've provided helpful talking points and a sample letter, which you can find by clicking on the button below. Send your letters from your personal email address during non-work hours.

**Letter Campaign
Talking Points, Sample
Letter, Contact Links**

NTT vs. Term

Did you know the term in Term Faculty is short for terminal? We all know these faculty members are not terminal. Many have been in their positions for years, if not decades. Our Committee on Non-Tenure Track (NTT) Members requests a change when referring to these positions. Instead of using 'term faculty,' use 'NTT faculty.' It's more accurate, and it's more respectful.

Higher Education in the News

- 14 Alaska State Legislators signed and sent a letter to our D.C. delegation, emphasizing the importance of maintaining federal funding at current levels. UNAC facilitated the writing of this letter. ([more here](#))
 - A UNAC faculty member & P.I. at UAF is still waiting for \$7.5M in federal grant funding for a critical mineral mapping project to be unfrozen by the Department of Energy. ([more here](#))
 - UC faculty, staff, and students, supported by local unions, AAUP, and other non-profits, sued the Trump administration over threats to academic freedom-the right to teach and learn. ([more here](#))
 - UC Berkeley sent 160 names to the Trump administration over allegations of antisemitism, infringing on academic freedom and campus free speech. ([more here](#))
 - Columbia's professors begin putting academic freedom statements in the syllabi. ([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.

- University of Minnesota (UM) custodial staff won a new contract with UM after Farm Aid musicians, including Willie Nelson, refused to cross the picket line to perform on campus. ([more here](#))
 - Instructors at Kenya's public universities went on strike to demand backpay to 2021 and implementation of their 2021 CBA. Things might seem bad in the US, but at least our CBA is implemented, and raises are in place! ([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, October 14, 2025, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. AKDT

Next UNAC Representative Assembly Meeting*

Saturday, October 18, 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

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

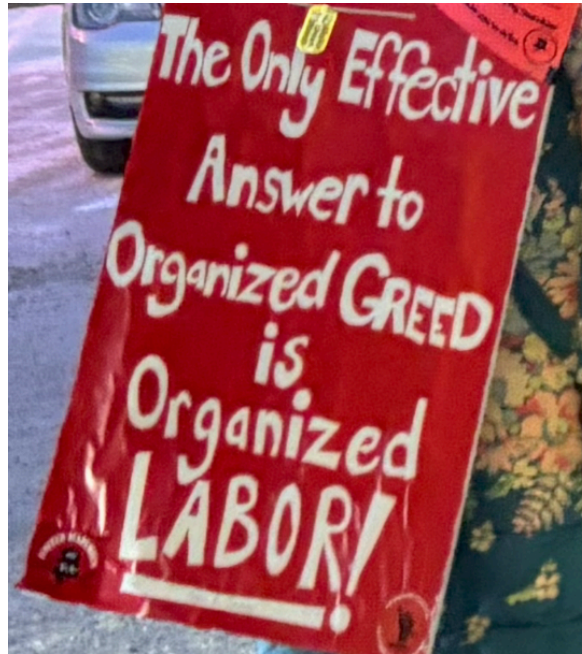
Our [YouTube channel](#) (@United Academics_4996_AK) has short member-to-member video messages, videos explaining union rights, training videos for promotion and workloads, and other informational content. Contact us if you have additional training or other video requests.

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)



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!