

Pat Pitney
UA President

Butrovich Bldg, Ste. 202, 2025 Yukon Drive
P.O. Box 755000, Fairbanks, AK 99775-5000
Phone: (907) 450-8000; Fax: (907) 450-8012
Email: ua.president@alaska.edu
www.alaska.edu



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TO: University of Alaska Community

FROM: UA President Pat Pitney

RE: Update on Union Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) Negotiations

Securing a legislative appropriation to fund reasonable compensation increases for all University employees is among my highest priorities. If UNAC's CBA is not tentatively agreed to in time for Legislative appropriation this session, compensation increases for faculty covered by the CBA cannot be paid this year. This reality has been communicated during negotiations and again in my March 22, 2022 communication. Today marks the 98th day of the 120-day legislative session, with the budget closeout occurring days in advance of the end of the session. Time is running out.

Given the urgency of the situation, today UA's bargaining team gave United Academics (UNAC) the University's "last best offer" for a new CBA. This is a required step either toward rapid agreement, or statutory deadlock and mediation. The monetary offer is more than anticipated in our original budget planning, in recognition of changing economic conditions. At the same time I believe it is modest enough to be agreed to by the Board of Regents and accepted and funded by the legislature if received in time.

The University's offer includes annual raises over three years of 3%, 2.5%, and 2%. While I wish it was more, larger increases risk funding failure, a veto, and further disruption and contraction of programs, services, and essential positions. The University's offer also includes a nearly 25% increase in the wage base against which pension contributions are made – the first such increase in decades.

With regard to non-monetary terms, the University's proposal largely maintains current contract language, while making certain concessions proposed by UNAC. We are willing to work hard, alongside UNAC, to secure funding for monetary terms. However, the University is not willing to dismantle long-standing and fundamental CBA provisions that would jeopardize the successful operation of our multi-university system. Please visit the [labor relations bargaining website](#) if you would like more information.

Our steps today reflect the fact that despite 8 months of negotiations, the parties remain far apart on a number of issues. We hope that UNAC will accept the offer as is so that we can move quickly to submit it to the legislature. Although it increases the risk of missing the legislature's session clock, the alternative is to promptly agree to FMCS mediation to hopefully facilitate a rapid agreement.

¹ By law, ratification is not required to seek appropriation.

² Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

Local 6070 and Adjuncts

Negotiations also have been underway with both Local 6070 and United Academics Adjuncts (UNAD).

The CBA with Local 6070 was set to expire on June 30, 2022. However, the University and Local 6070 agreed to extend the current contract one year to June 30, 2023. The monetary terms include a grid increase of 2% and a “me-too” clause linked to certain potential UNAC and staff increases.

The CBA between the University of Alaska and United Academics - Adjuncts expired on February 28, 2022. That CBA remains in effect during negotiations to the extent required by Alaska law. The parties have been negotiating since March and have tentatively agreed upon seven of the twenty articles. The University will continue negotiating in good faith with UNAD; however, the same time constraint for legislative funding exists.

Staff and Local 1324 AFL-CIO Firefighters

As you know, the FY23 Board budget included a 2% salary increase for employees not in bargaining units. The monetary increases in the UNAC “last best offer” will extend to staff if the parties reach agreement on the UNAC CBA. Under their current CBA, Local 1324 firefighters are receiving the same raises received by staff under a “me too” clause. I have every reason to believe the legislature will include a modest adjustment to our appropriation to accommodate any additional staff, firefighter, and Local 6070 increases if they have the opportunity to address the UNAC CBA this session.

Budget Status

The Governor included \$4 million of the UA-requested \$8 million for the 2% compensation increase for staff and other fixed cost increases. The House and the Senate operating budgets both include funding for the 2% compensation increases for staff, firefighters, and Local 6070.

As a foundational component of achieving financial stability, I have recommended and the Board has supported the philosophy of regular modest increases for UA employees. Staff will receive those increases starting in July. My focus is to assure our faculty also receive regular modest annual increases, starting this July. That can only be accomplished if we put forward a tentatively agreed CBA within the next few weeks that is acceptable to the Board of Regents and legislature, and that is reasonable enough to avoid a veto by the governor.

I appreciate all that you do for the University of Alaska. I’m excited for the start of a new fiscal year that is moving UA toward fiscal stability. That, and a rapid conclusion to labor negotiations, will fuel our collective progress toward meeting Alaska’s ever-growing research and workforce needs.