

# UIC United Faculty VOICE

Issue 1 | 2018 Summer Edition



Solidarity with Western Illinois UP4100 #FairContractNow

## SOLIDARITY FOREVER...

It's been quite an eventful year for organized labor and public education! We're full of hope seeing [voters block anti-worker legislation in Missouri](#), [teachers win major investments in public education across the US](#), [faculty protect their pensions in the UK](#) and [grad workers save tuition waivers at UIUC](#), plus the [millions of young people saying "enough!" to gun violence](#).

These movements are pressing forward, not because of any one walkout or protest, but because they are united in their conviction. Sure, there is self-interest driving many who need a raise or access to health care, but collective action grew from their belief in their colleagues, schools, students, public education, democracy and justice (among other things).

In a public seminar with Joshua Ramey, Professor of Philosophy at Grinnell College, we discussed reasons why faculty don't do solidarity. In his framework, the growing corporatization of higher education, and the need to produce a "return on investment" for those who consume our labor, is restricting the space for collective, democratic action. And the growing administrative apparatus has transformed our work with students and our community into "service," accounted for in annual reports, disconnected from the governance of our university.

An alternative would be to reframe our collective faculty efforts – teaching, research and service – as the "moil" that runs the university. As such, it is our responsibility to do solidarity, take risks together, and to "occupy the university" as a democratic labor collective. Whatever we do, it should be grounded in our belief in public higher education and democracy.

## JANUS AND YOU

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, the US Supreme Court struck down 40 years of precedent by barring public sector unions from collecting fair share fees for the services they provide to all in their bargaining units. The [Janus decision](#) was a politically motivated attack on organized labor, meant to financially cripple unions around the country and stifle employees' collective voice.

### It didn't.

For our faculty union at UIC, membership actually increased, with 40 new members in June and July.

While dues deduction for non-members in our bargaining unit ceased and the financial impact of losing fair-share fees can't be discounted, the state of our union is sound. Labor's power, of course, has never been about how much money we could raise. It's about people joining together in collective action.

For example, in the immediate aftermath of the decision, Labor Relations unilaterally imposed new dues procedures on unions at UIC, including summarily cancelling the dues status of 145 of our confirmed members. [Rapid action](#) by UICUF, in coalition with 3 other campus unions, however, forced Labor Relations to relent and honor all prior and new memberships.

We intend to continue exercising our collective action rights as upheld by the [Illinois Attorney General](#) and will not be distracted from our primary goal of negotiating a stronger contract for our faculty.

## UICUF BARGAINING UPDATE

The Bargaining Committee has been hard at work since last Fall, planning for contract negotiations. In May, we presented our demand to bargain, and met with Administration's team for the first time in June.

Since then, we've had 5 bargaining sessions. We reached early agreements on a number of simple articles, and are now negotiating on important non-financial issues. The progress of negotiations will, of course, depend on how difficult Labor Relations wants to make it. We won't trade speed for efficacy, however, and will negotiate for as long as it takes to get the best contract for our members.

Check up on the latest in negotiations via the [bargaining updates on our website](#).

If you are interested in joining or want more information about the work of the committee, contact Co-Chairs Aaron Krall ([aaronkrall@gmail.com](mailto:aaronkrall@gmail.com)) and Kevin Whyte ([kevin.m.whyte@gmail.com](mailto:kevin.m.whyte@gmail.com)).

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT OR CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT? WHY NOT BOTH?

A group of faculty, students and union staff attended a Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting in Urbana this March. Our intent was to be visibly present while the trustees discussed budgets, future cost of pensions, and other fiduciary responsibilities that include our labor. Most striking was the amount of time spent discussing real estate development. This included the proposed [Discovery Partners Institute](#) here in Chicago, which will be built with private investment but also \$500 million funding from the State of Illinois. That is right, a half a billion of tax payers dollars!

We were all challenged to understand the decisions made by our Trustees at this meeting. While these developments are connected to the teaching and research mission, they raise many red flags! In a state that continues to cut spending for public higher education and where students struggle to pay their tuition, how come the BOT and Governor can find new funds for buildings, but not students or faculty?

And why does the Chancellor suggest that, despite the rise in enrollment, we might need to decide between hiring more tenure track faculty and pay raises for current faculty. Considering the "return on investment" of *human* capital development, we should be demanding the BOT put more money into UIC so we can get pay raises AND new Faculty.

## SHARED GOVERNANCE

As we all know, shared governance is at the core of how universities are expected to operate. In reality, we also know that it varies, to say the least, how that happens on a daily basis at UIC! We have been helping faculty to insert themselves when it is clear that shared governance is not being respected, and in some cases, completely ignored. What we are learning from these situations is just how uninformed some administrators are, but also how our own faculty benefit from reading the [statutes](#) and bylaws; this is where our *rights and responsibilities* in shared governance are laid out – not in our contract.

This Spring, the UICUF Shared Governance and Academic Freedom committee launched our first "shared governance" survey to help us get a better understanding of how things work at UIC. Focusing on department level decision making, we heard from a representative in nearly every department. The results were also used to honor the Occupational Therapy department with the 2018 John Shuler Shared Governance and Academic Freedom Award, which recognizes a unit with strong shared governance practices. The OT department received \$500 to spend as it sees fit (using shared governance of course!), a plaque and a framed declaration, which were presented at a union sponsored event in April.

We intend to continue researching governance in the future, and will focus on the college level in 2019.



Congrats  
Occupational  
Therapy!

## UICUF ELECTIONS

This April, UICUF held elections to fill positions on the Executive Board and Representative Assembly, our two main governing bodies. For the first time, we actually held a contested election for Humanities Representatives, resulting in a very tight race!

You can view the newly elected officers on our [UIC United Faculty Website's People Page](#).

There are still a handful of Representative spots to fill. We are looking for a Rep for Business and for Social Work, as well as second Reps for Engineering and Social & Behavioral Sciences.

Special thanks to our Elections Committee for facilitating our internal democratic process!

## UIGEO WINS NEW CONTRACT!



After 11 days on [STRIKE](#) and 3 days occupying President Killeen's offices, the GEO at UIUC won a new 5 year bargaining agreement, ratified by 98% of membership. Here are the big wins they fought for:

**Tuition waivers:** Moved from a side letter to a new *article* in the contract language that clearly and explicitly guarantees tuition waivers for all Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants with appointments between 25% and 67% FTE.

**Wages:** Increases were secured retroactively increasing campus minimum wage 4.5% and 2% for two years moving forward, plus an additional 2.5% increase retroactively for re-appointment.

**Healthcare and Dependent Coverage:** Administration agreed to pay 87% of the health care premium, up from 80%, for Fall and Spring semesters, and 25% of the premium for one dependent (up from 0).

**Appointment Letters:** As with our non-tenure track faculty, GEO requires appointment letters 60 days in advance. However, because over 90% of appointment letters came late, the new contract gives assistants \$50 if they do not receive their notice 30 days in advance (unless the appointment is for a new course section on short notice). That can add up with 2,700 people!



The Fearless Undocumented Alliance is a UIC student run organization that aims to provide academic, financial, and mental health support to undocumented UIC students facing significant financial insecurities due to their ineligibility for FAFSA and many scholarships. In addition, the recent rescindment of DACA has created a lot of uncertainty. FUA has created a scholarship fund in order to assist undocumented students to pay for college by awarding scholarships. To make a donation go to:

<https://www.gofundme.com/fua2017>

## YES APPLY ILLINOIS!

Yes Apply Illinois is a student-led coalition working to abolish the invasive and humiliating University of Illinois admissions questions about past convictions and high school disciplinary violations. All students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners are welcome to join this effort for a more inclusive university. Here are some talking points:

- Our admissions applications force potential students to describe and write essays about their conviction records and even high school "behavioral conduct" or disciplinary violations.
- This discourages applications. Given that 47% of adults in Illinois have records, we must address this barrier to education.
- The U.S. Department of Education has advised universities to help reverse—rather than contribute to—the damaging impact of convictions. They urge colleges to remove this question. New York (SUNY) just removed it. California never had it. U of I must lead the way in Illinois and abolish these questions.

Direct Contact: [YesApplyIL@gmail.com](mailto:YesApplyIL@gmail.com)



[Group asks UI trustees to drop criminal-history questions from admissions process.](#) *News Gazette* 3-16-18

## Don't Mess With Our Benefits!

If any benefits for Tier 1 are negotiated/taken away, then the State Universities Annuitants Association will be back in court because we already fought this battle between the Kanerva case and Senate Bill 1. Check out what the SUAA does at <http://www.suaa.org/> and for more information about the pending AFSCME case that could result in Governor Rauner raising our health care costs.

# UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## New Faculty Meet and Greet

**Thursday, August 23, 4:45-5:30pm**  
**@Student Center East, 750 S Halsted St**

Help UIC United Faculty greet our new colleagues at their New Faculty Orientation, and make some new friends in the process! Our Union President, Janet Smith, will speak briefly at 4:45, followed by a meet-and-greet session after the event, from 5-5:30. UICUF Rep assembly, open to all members, will be meeting immediately prior to the event. Send your RSVPs to [UICUnitedFaculty@gmail.com](mailto:UICUnitedFaculty@gmail.com).



## UICUF Back-to-School BBQ

**Sunday, September 2, Starting 4:00pm**  
**@312 S Lombard Ave, Oak Park**

Summer may be coming to a close, but won't be letting it get away without throwing one last celebration with our friends and colleagues. Join us at the home of union members Milos Zefran & Barbara Di Eugenio for this family-friendly event. Enjoy food, fun, and the last rays of Summer sun! Send your RSVPs to [UICUnitedFaculty@gmail.com](mailto:UICUnitedFaculty@gmail.com).



## Faculty-Student Ice Cream Social

**Wednesday, September 5, 12:00-2:00pm**  
**@East Campus Quad**

Welcome our students back for Fall Semester with a kind word and a sweet treat! UIC United Faculty will be sponsoring an ice cream social for students, and informing them about what the union is, and what it means for their education. Our working conditions are their learning conditions, so come by and say hello! Send your RSVPs to [UICUnitedFaculty@gmail.com](mailto:UICUnitedFaculty@gmail.com).

## UICUF Fall Membership Meeting

**Wednesday, October 10, 3:30-5:00pm**  
**@Hull House Dining Hall, 800 S Halsted**

Membership meetings are a critical part of our union democracy. Join us at Jane Adams Hull House to discuss important workplace issues, including bargaining updates and next steps for our contract campaign. If you are new to the university or the union, this is your opportunity to learn more and get involved! Send your RSVPs to [UICUnitedFaculty@gmail.com](mailto:UICUnitedFaculty@gmail.com).



# NEW MEMBER BENEFITS FROM AFT

## Union Plus Scholarships for 2019

Apply for scholarships (\$500-4,000) through the [Union Plus Scholarship Program](#) this school year for yourself or a family member.

## Free College

Eastern Gateway Community College in Ohio is a fully accredited, nonprofit public institution that is part of the University System of Ohio. Students can enroll in the online distance-learning program with no costs for tuition, fees or e-texts. Credits earned can be transferred to a four-year college; to date, credits have transferred to 320 educational institutions in 39 states. The program offers seven associate degrees, including business administration, early childhood education, accounting, paralegal, criminal justice and two certificate programs.

### *Eligibility*

This is open to all AFT members, including retirees, as well as their spouses/domestic partners, children, grandchildren, step-children, step-grandchildren, and legal dependents.

### *How does it work?*

Under an academic partnership with Eastern Gateway Community College, the Union Plus Free College Benefit offers grants—known as “last dollar scholarships”—that fill the gap between any federal, state and employer education grants for tuition, fees and e-books for certain online programs at Eastern Gateway.

### *Is it too good to be true?*

The AFT did a thorough review of this program and the institution. Faculty and staff are represented by our colleagues at the NEA. Ohio state law doesn't allow adjuncts to be unionized, but the college president has made a commitment to meeting the AFT's standards for employment of adjunct faculty. So it is true. And it is good. Education is core to our mission, so we can't think of a better program to offer as one of our newest benefits.

Union Plus website: [www.unionplusfreecollege.org](http://www.unionplusfreecollege.org)

## Identity Theft Protection

AFT now offers FREE Identity Theft Protection for ALL members including retirees. Learn more at [AFT.org](http://AFT.org).

## Mortgage Program

AFT has joined with New York's first “union bank” to offer a new home financing program. The program offers competitive interest rates and discounts on mortgages and refinancing solutions.

### *Program highlights:*

- Flexible adjustable-rate mortgages and stable fixed-rate mortgages;
- Refinance lending options;
- Competitive rates and timely approvals;
- An easy prequalification and online application process;
- \$700 in discounts on origination fees for AFT members; and
- Strike protection eligibility, where Amalgamated Bank will waive up to three late-payment fees if a member's local is on strike.

### *Why Amalgamated Bank?*

The mission of Amalgamated Bank is one we can all ascribe to as union members and public servants—“to be the financial institution for progressive people and organizations: those who are working and living to make the world more just, more compassionate and more sustainable.”

Amalgamated Mortgage Program:

<https://www.amalgamatedbank.com/aft-home-financing-program>

## UICUF MISSION

*Realize the mission of the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) as a public research university in a democratic society.*

*Make the promise of shared governance a reality by backing it with the power of collective bargaining.*

*Make sure that every member of the faculty has an individual voice and that the faculty as a whole has a collective voice in determining our future.*

*Keep the principles of academic freedom, free speech and free inquiry central both to our union and our university.*

