

# UA workers, prepare to strike!

## Let's impose our will on the bosses!

### Wages cut by 18% since 2017!

Since 2017 University of Alaska faculty wages have gone up 6.89%. At the same time, the cost of living has increased 28.26%. This means we've actually taken a **massive 18% pay cut!** If wages had kept up with inflation, UA faculty would be making tens of thousands of dollars more.

### Cut-rate wages

It only gets worse.

In 2019 many UA faculty got letters saying they were paid far below the national average. (One letter said over \$8,000 dollars below the national average!) Our bosses promised to remedy that over three years. It never happened. The 2019 state budget cuts gave them an excuse to drop the matter forever.

As some UA workers left and others were forced into the ranks of the unemployed, those left took on extra duties. On the one hand, intensification of work. On the other, massive pay cuts.

And still the bosses find more ways to attack our full wage. Look at your benefits for just one example. You're constantly paying more for less.

### Struggle the only way forward!

"Power concedes nothing without demand."

Our bosses will never voluntarily raise our pay. We must **impose our will on them.**

Educators across the country have done just this by striking. Here are a few examples:

- University of Illinois Chicago faculty struck in January 2023. They won 17.75% over four years and more secure contracts.
- Teachers in Portland struck and won 14.4% compounded over three years.
- Rutgers faculty struck in 2023 and won "at least 14%" over the course of two years.

You want the same? Then we need to **FORCE** our bosses' hand.

How? The way smart workers have always fought: with *every* tactic at their disposal!

### What are we to do?

There is no ready-made blueprint for how we can best fight. That's something we'll all figure out in struggle. Still, some general principles should guide us.

### No individual solutions

First, let's dispel the idea that each one of us can find our own way out of this mess.

Taking on extra work just means intensifying our own exploitation. Looking for merit pay is a fool's errand. Leaving for another job is a surrender.

### Unions – an outmoded form!

Unions have always had the role of negotiating the sale of workers' labor power. It was once possible for the unions to fight and win. But by the 1900s unions were integrated into the capitalist state's legal framework. The methods open to them were greatly curtailed. What's more, a mature capitalism could make ever-fewer concessions to the working class. Unions became nothing more than cops that stand between bosses and workers.

Today the only workers who can win big are those strong enough to go **outside of and against** the class-collaborationist framework of the unions.

### Solidarity across all lines!

Solidarity between every section of the working class is our greatest strength. Straitjacketed by the state, our union is legally unable to extend the struggle outside of our "bargaining unit." And you better believe the bosses will look for every chance to divide and conquer.

First, we need to question any call to focus on racial or gender pay inequality *instead* of the common exploitation we all face. Abolishing racial and gender inequalities in pay should be part of our demands, yes. But this is something we can only win by an overwhelming, unified struggle against the bosses' slave wages.

Second, we need to link up our struggles with those of staff and adjuncts. As long each group stands alone, none of us can threaten the bosses. Divided, our punches lack weight. Divided, the bosses will play each group against the others.

Third, we need to get students involved. The bosses will try to turn them against us. But our struggle is for them, too. Fighting for higher pay and better conditions means to demand that the state value *their* education. More than that, we should aim to pass on a tradition of militancy to them. There is no more valuable lesson!

### **Rule out nothing!**

During the last contract negotiation, we heard an exchange almost exactly like this:

**Worker:** "I have millions of dollars worth of equipment that will break down if I go on strike and can't maintain it."

**Union official:** "That's okay. You can briefly cross the picket line to maintain it."

The worker had the ability to hurt the University for millions of dollars by simply withholding his labor power. What did our "responsible" union leaders tell him? In short: "Throw down your wonder-weapon!"

We get the leaders we deserve. If we were more combative, more clear-eyed, we wouldn't tolerate answers like this one. Neither would we have even asked the question. We'd know that any and every method is on the table.

Not just passive sabotage as seen in the above exchange, but also *active* sabotage. Walkouts. Occupations. Slowdowns. Sickouts. Anything else we can think of. Whatever gets the goods!

Civility will get us nowhere. As Trotsky said, "to make the individual sacred we must destroy the

social order which crucifies him. And this problem can only be solved by blood and iron."

### **Prepare for a long fight!**

Something like 93% of faculty voted for the last sellout contract. Those who belong to the combative minority have a lot of eyes to open. Indeed, there's no guarantee we can impose our demands during this particular contract cycle. But let's recognize a few things:

1. Every blow we strike, every link we forge, builds our confidence for future battles.
2. The struggle between boss and worker isn't limited to the months in which we're negotiating a new contract. Every day, we have the chance to defend ourselves and win back a little of what we've lost. If we go into the next negotiation with a record of militancy, we'll be in a much stronger position to make demands.
3. We'll get no help from the docile masses and the capitalist media. Appealing to them is pointless. We have to go it alone, like it or not. We will win not because our enemy is weak, but only because *we* are strong.

### **Discuss!**

Our strength is **collective action**. Let's start planning. Visit our website. There you will find a link to a totally anonymous chat and more.



<https://uaworkers.neocities.org>

"There are no supreme saviors  
Neither God, nor Caesar, nor tribune  
Producers, let us save ourselves!"  
– *The Internationale*