



United Academics CAC Summary Report, Spring Semester 2021

For Spring semester 2021, our United Academics Contract Administration Committee (CAC) fielded approximately 120 inquiries. Below, we summarize representative work for the past semester across the major categories of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) that the CAC typically addresses.

Any questions or concerns about this report can be addressed to contract@unitedacademics.org.

FORMAL GRIEVANCES:

We have filed a grievance contesting a change in retiree health care benefits (BCBS Medicare supplement) under which certain providers who are unable to reimburse via Medicare are not covered. This health care plan change was not warned to United Academics and requires impact bargaining; the grievance process is ongoing.

We also filed four separate grievances for individuals or groups of faculty related to the non-reappointment of several Senior Lecturers and related to CBA-mandated recall rights and severance payments for non-reappointed Senior Lecturers. One of these grievances was successfully resolved, and three others are ongoing.

DISCIPLINE / AAEO:

We have provided representation and consultation for one faculty member who is subject to a disciplinary process; this process started in early spring and is ongoing. In two additional situations, we consulted with faculty who had concerns about UVM AAEO processes related to student behavior. In both AAEO cases, the faculty member(s) were not the focus of any investigation. Finally, although no formal discipline was brought, we acted to support the academic freedom rights of a faculty member who received an inappropriate 'counseling memo' following protected public criticism of the UVM administration.

WORKLOAD:

As is typical, workload was the largest and broadest category of inquiry. We responded to structural and process concerns such as delays in workload forms, modifications to workload forms without faculty consultation, and the relationship between workload and FTE status. We also fielded questions on aspects of faculty work which are unique to particular subsets of faculty, such as credit for supervising Honors theses, Honors enrichment credits, and service-learning courses. We also helped faculty navigate annual reviews and various workload discussions with chairs and Deans. The newly ratified CBA mandates review of departmental

course equivalency policies for all credit-bearing instructional activities. Stay tuned for reminders on that in the Fall semester, as that will be an important opportunity for faculty involvement in determining appropriate course equivalency policies in each department.

RPT AND ANNUAL EVALUATIONS:

We fielded a variety of questions and concerns about RPT processes, including regarding which set of standard documents should apply to a given case, the length and nature of appointments, advice for promotion dossiers and submitting rebuttals to evaluations, CBA-mandated extension of probationary periods, appropriate processes for revising RPT documents, and confidentiality of student course evaluations.

BENEFITS AND SABBATICALS:

Questions and concerns in this category included parental leave, professional development funds (PDFs), and severance pay, among other topics. Multiple inquiries related to retiree benefits and which aspects of University systems and resources still apply to retirees. As noted above, we are grieving a change in retiree health care coverage (BCBS Medicare supplement plan) that was not warned to United Academics.

OTHER INQUIRIES:

We provided information and support for several faculty who negotiated Voluntary Retirement Agreements (VRAs), a number of MOUs related to unique and specific work arrangements, as well as faculty considering leaving UVM for positions elsewhere. We have received an unusually large number of VRAs in the past month, mainly for tenured faculty members at or nearing retirement age, each with different incentives depending on the unit and the faculty member's situation. Because these individual agreements affect working conditions for individual bargaining unit members, VRAs are handled between United Academics and Labor Relations after a faculty member discusses the terms with their Dean. Our role in UA is to ensure that any agreements are not in conflict with the CBA and that they are acceptable to the faculty member. If any UA faculty are in discussions around transition to retirement, feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

We also reviewed and fielded inquiries on revisions to official University policies to ensure their compliance with the CBA. In addition, we fielded a variety of inquiries that did not fall easily into the categories above. Selected examples include bargaining unit eligibility of individual faculty, pandemic classroom capacities and the pandemic health screening form, conflicts with chairs and other administrators, wording of salary letters, and questions relating to public records requests.

Several new inquiries were the result of ongoing University efforts at academic reorganization. These included responding to questions about program deactivation, possible retrenchment due to program closures, the scope and process of changes to majors and minors, and the logistics of faculty potentially requesting a move to a different department or college. We anticipate the

reorganization process and impact to be an active area of ongoing CAC work for AY 2021-2022 (and beyond).

Spring 2021 CAC Members:

Keith Burt (UA Grievance Officer, Psychological Science)

Katlyn Morris (UA Executive Director)

Deb Noel (English)

John Forbes (Theatre)

Koela Ray (Biomedical and Health Sciences)

The CAC welcomes **Wade Carson**, Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Biomedical and Health Sciences, as incoming Grievance Officer as of June 1!

Jeanne Shea, Associate Professor of Anthropology, also joins our CAC team!

CAC email: contract@unitedacademics.org