



Sept. 12, 2017

UVM/United Academics Negotiations Reach Impasse

Following seven months of good faith discussions at the bargaining table, UVM and United Academics declared impasse in their negotiations for a successor contract at 9:00 a.m. on September 12, 2017. The next phase of the process will be to engage a mutually acceptable outside mediator to assist the parties with reaching agreement. In four of the five previous rounds of bargaining between the parties, impasse was declared and a final resolution was achieved through the mediation process. The University strongly respects the collective bargaining process and will continue in good faith to work through the agreed upon process to achieve a successful conclusion.

The University is steadfastly committed to offering its employees competitive, market-based compensation, a supportive work environment, and a comprehensive, substantial benefits program that is accessible across all employment categories. At the same time, UVM continues an abiding commitment to student success by providing a high quality educational experience that is financially accessible and affordable for all students.

As mediation gets underway, it is important that our institutional context is articulated and understood. That context includes these elements:

- Current United Academics faculty salaries are at or above market levels. Accounting for rank and discipline, FY 2016 faculty salaries were above 104% of the Oklahoma State University Faculty Survey Average for Public High Research Institutions. This longstanding survey has been used for years to determine comparable salaries.
- Regarding faculty teaching loads, the majority of classes at UVM have 20 or fewer students in them.
- UVM's student-faculty ratio continues at a favorable level as compared to public universities nationally. In the last available comparison year, the fall 2015 ratio was 16:1, vs 18:1 for public universities nationally.

— Most full-time UVM faculty have a standard contract term of 9 months per year on which their salaries are based. In addition, full-time UVM faculty enjoy other paid benefits such as sabbatical and professional development leaves.

— UVM's two other unions (Teamsters and United Electrical Workers) each have agreed to contracts with 2% pay increases per year for 3 years. In addition, and importantly, the lowest starting salaries for United Electrical Workers will adjust to \$14 per hour by the final year of the three-year contract. All other UVM employees already are at or above \$14 per hour.

— Non-represented staff compensation has been set at a 2% increase for FY 2018, effective last July 1. The 2% pool includes both cost of living adjustments and merit increases. In sum, all employee groups across the University have a salary increase of 2%, with the exception of faculty represented by United Academics.

— With a 2017-18 budget set by the Board of Trustees in May, 2017, salary increases beyond 2% per year would necessitate additional tuition increases for students and their families, and/or would lead to substantial budget reductions. In general, the burden of a tuition increase is not one shared by the faculty since their dependents receive free tuition at UVM.

The UVM benefits plan includes an income-sensitive progressive approach to employee health insurance premium contributions, full tuition remission for employees and their dependents, dental insurance, and a retirement contribution of 10% of salary for those faculty who enroll in the retirement plan.

The University of Vermont seeks a fair and reasonable settlement of the contract with United Academics – one that continues UVM's commitment to providing competitive salary and benefits, and an excellent working environment for all employees, while at the same time honoring our commitment to students by providing a high quality educational experience that is financially accessible and affordable. Our goal is to avoid the burden of higher tuition for our students and their families, and/or the impact of budget reductions on UVM's dedicated employees.

We are confident that working together constructively and in good faith with United Academics, the University will reach a mutually satisfactory outcome, as has been the case currently with all other employee groups at UVM.

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