



# UNION WIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AUGUST

2019

## SEBAC Holds Line on Pension Re-Amortization Talks

SEBAC and the Lamont Administration have completed their discussions on pension re-amortization in accordance with the recently passed biennial budget and have reached an agreement. It keeps the parties' commitment to make no change in pension benefits.

The agreement will be submitted to the General Assembly for approval. This is part of SEBAC's continuing effort to work with the Lamont Administration on "win-win" solutions for achieving efficiency that will benefit everyone. Completing the re-amortization of the state pension fund, adjusting the schedule to pay off Connecticut's pension debt, will help stabilize state pensions and ensure obligations to current and future

are fully funded; it was included in the recently passed budget along with re-amortizing the Teacher's Retirement Fund.

None of the proposed savings would result in changes to the pension and health insurance benefits of state employees or retirees. SEBAC will not be part of asking for more sacrifices for state employees, who have already given so much for the citizens of Connecticut that they serve.

Our 2017 agreement is saving Connecticut taxpayers \$25 billion over the next 20 years, helping to close the chronic budget deficits that imperil vital public services.

## Dealing with Discrimination Workshop

The Social Justice Committee hosted a "Dealing with Discrimination" workshop on June 28 with the goal of building power within our membership to confront and dismantle systems of discrimination at UConn.

Workshop participants began the discussion with a critique of UCPEA's contractual non-discrimination language. Field Representative Patti Williams highlighted how the current contract language in Article 5 limits the union from fully protecting every member. The discussion generated excitement about improving contract language as we prepare for upcoming contract negotiations. The new amendments to the UCPEA constitution reinforce the power of the members to witness and influence contract negotiations.

UCPEA members heard from other UConn unionists and their experiences in their past contract negotiations. Both David Amdur from AAUP and Kate Ragon from the Graduate Employee Union spoke about the University's efforts to produce contract language that limited their unions' ability to confront issues of discrimination and sexual harassment.

Both spoke of their members' resolve to fight against this attack and offered participants tools for mobilizing UCPEA members behind this issue.

Field Representative Lindsay Jenkelunas led a discussion about the current climate for UCPEA members who identify within an underrepresented or marginalized group. Several members shared their own experiences, which underlined the importance of using a collective voice to confront systems of discrimination.

Professionals from outside the University also highlighted multiple avenues for dealing with discrimination. John Watts, a probation officer represented by the Judicial Professional Employees Union, discussed how he interacted with community organizations like the local NAACP to address issues of discrimination within the judicial branch. Attorney Elizabeth Adams offered practical advice about working with a legal counsel. Workshop participants were especially engaged in the discussion with Tanya A. Hughes, executive director of the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

## Scholarships Awarded to Children of UCPEA Members

Two children of UCPEA members were awarded scholarships of \$1,000 each for the upcoming academic year.

Bethany A. Lafontaine, daughter of Lorri Lafontaine, administrative coordinator in Material Science and Engineering, received the Sandy Schulte Memorial Scholarship for high school seniors who will be full-time matriculating students in 2019-2020. This scholarship is based on academic achievement, and community and school involvement. The scholarship is given in remembrance of UCPEA founding member Sandy Schulte. Bethany plans to major in Allied Health Sciences.

Xinyu Lin, daughter of Hali Lin, accounting supervisor in the Office of the Controller received the Austin Leadership scholarship for full-time students at UConn during the 2019-20 school year. This scholarship is given in recognition of the leadership of former President Philip Austin and celebrates the outstanding working relationship he fostered with UCPEA during his tenure. Xinyu is a senior civil engineering major and has been recognized as a BOLD Women's Leadership Network Scholar and serves as an undergraduate researcher on the Partnerships for International Research and Education (PIRE) project which focuses on the sustainability of water resources in Ethiopia.

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## Dates, Deadlines, and Things To Do

Aug. 7, Wed., Union Rep/Stewards Meeting – SU304B

Aug. 13, Tues. Executive Board Meeting, SU320

Aug. 14, Wed., Healthy Eating Luncheon Towers

Sept. 2, Labor Day – UCPEA Office Closed

Sept. 4, Wed., Union Rep/Stewards Meeting, SU304B

Sept. 12, Thurs., Executive Board Meeting, SU320

Sept. 16, Mon., Union Rep/Stewards Training, SU310

Oct. 2, Wed., Union Rep/Stewards Meeting, SU104

*All events and meetings are at noon, unless otherwise noted*

- **Membership Discounts**
- **Professional Development applications are reviewed at the beginning of each month**
- **Childcare Deadlines Jan. – April (Due May 15); May – Aug. (Due Sept. 15); Sept. – Dec. (Due Jan. 15)**

### Dependent Tuition Waivers

The benefit applies to Fall & Spring semesters only

#### Deadlines

Fall Semester – June 1

Spring Semester – Nov. 15

### Employee Tuition Waivers

The waiver applies to the Fall and Spring semesters only.

#### Deadlines

Fall Semester – Oct. 15

Spring Semester – Feb. 28

### Tuition Reimbursement

Reimbursements apply to summer, fall and spring course work

Summer: Sept. 15

Fall Semester: Jan. 15

Spring Semester: June 1