



UNION WIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER

2019

Gunn, McDermott, Ward Named Unionists of the Year

Greg Gunn, Sharon McDermott and Rhonda Ward have been recognized as Unionist of the Year for their ongoing work on behalf of UCPEA and their persistence in advocacy for members. They were recognized during the May 7 annual meeting.

Gunn is a production technical analyst 3 in the Enterprise Applications section of Information Technology Services. He has served the state of Connecticut for 30 years, the last 18 as a member of UCPEA. He became a Union Representative last year, helping to bring a stronger union presence to ITS professionals at the Depot Campus. He served on a reclassification panel this year where he diligently studied the evidence and refused to agree with the position of the management panel member, thereby creating a split decision that allowed the grievant to move forward in the process. He also participated in an AFT video series with the goal of sharing his story to encourage others to support and strengthen their union.

Ward is an administrative services assistant in the Materials Science Institute and has been an UCPEA member since 2010. She is always ready, willing and able to speak up at UCPEA meetings, whether to agree, disagree or for the purpose of clarification of what is being stated. She believes it is essential for our union membership to have real unity and not just



UNIONISTS OF THE YEAR: UCPEA President Mike White with Unionists of the Year Rhonda Ward, Greg Gunn, Sharon McDermott at the Annual Meeting.

passive compliance with our principles as an organization and how we both strengthen and move UCPEA forward.

McDermott is a program assistant in Engineering Technical Services and has been an UCPEA member since 2002, serving as a Union Representative for the past four years. She has never lost her integrity or her commitment to stand up for herself and her colleagues. She has found strength in adversity and not allowed it to weaken her resolve to be a voice for justice.

UCPEA Files Complaint with Labor Board Over Classification Project

UCPEA has exercised our contractual and statutory right to file a complaint with the State Labor Board against the University for its failure to bargain in good faith with us in connection with the classification project. A grievance also was filed for failure to be in consultation with us on the project, as detailed in the Aug. 19 email that was sent to all members.

This action follows more than a year of ongoing efforts by the UCPEA classification team to make substantive progress on the project that is a part of our collective bargaining agreement. Additionally, we have begun working on how this issue will fit in to our priorities for the next round of contract negotiations.

Going forward, we will be providing the membership with

updates after each of our meetings with the University. These updates will be emailed to you and posted at <http://www.ucpea.org>. It is our hope that the University will begin to do their part to "resolve issues that arise together in a manner that is fully collaborative and transparent.

As we also noted on Aug. 21 in response to the email sent by Human Resources, it appears the University is attempting to rush "something" in place that we do not have confidence that this will meet the needs of our members. Our mission is to continue advocating for a system that will appropriately serve our membership. We will follow through on the complaint and grievance processes initiated over the last week in addition to keeping the membership updated in a timely manner.

SAVE THE DATES

OCT. 16 OPEN HOUSE

18 Dog Lane
Storrs, Connecticut
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

OCT. 22 MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Student Union Theatre
Noon

UCPEA Office Location

President Mike White discussed the consideration of a new office location for UCPEA's operations at the May 7 annual meeting. With the loss of member contributions following the union-busting efforts behind the Janus vs. AFSCME Supreme Court decision, the organization has carefully explored many cost-saving measures.

Exploring new office spaces was the most significant of these efforts. In addition to analyzing costs, UCPEA requires a space that is fully accessible to all UCPEA members, conveniently located from most UCPEA workplaces and accessible for members with disabilities.

UCPEA's staff and leadership looked at several locations to consider the cost of the space as well as any necessary renovations that might be needed. After much consideration, the decision was made to sign a new lease for the existing office at 18 Dog Lane in Storrs Center.

The UCPEA office had previously consisted of a downstairs space with offices and an open seating area, plus a large second floor conference room. Without an elevator to the second floor, the office was not fully accessible. Therefore, the new lease will only include the first floor space to ensure full accessibility as well as cost savings.

UCPEA Constitutional Improvements for Increased Member Participation

UCPEA members made their voices heard by an overwhelming vote in support to change the contract ratification process for the union.

The newly approved language provides for an open and methodically democratic ratification process once the Negotiating Committee has reached a Tentative Agreement with the University. This purposefully compliments the newly approved language for an open and democratic negotiation preparation process.

The new ratification process requires the Negotiating Committee to notify the membership within three days of a tentative agreement being reached with the University and involves two rounds of membership meetings at both the Storrs and regional campuses either in person or via electronic means. The full tentative agreement will be available to the membership on the UCPEA website five days prior to the first set of membership meetings. Three days following the initial set of meetings, a second round of membership meetings will be held to further clarify issues and answer questions from the membership. The electronic voting process begins following the second set of membership meetings and will be open for 72 hours.

The new ratification process is codified in Article XV of the UCPEA Constitution and will be the method and the standard by which contracts are ratified in the future.

Status of Individual Reclassification Process Clarification

The UCPEA Office has been alerted that many members believe, or have been told, that they cannot file for the reclassification of their individual position due to the pending update to the UCPEA classification system. This is incorrect.

Members, except for those on probation, can and should file for their job to be reclassified if they are consistently assigned duties above their present UCPEA level for at least two months. Members who believe their job should be reclassified need to meet with their supervisor requesting that a position assessment be performed. If the supervisor agrees, the following process should be followed:

- The supervisor is responsible for requesting (within two weeks of the initial meeting) an assessment. If the supervisor is not supportive of an assessment, members can request an assessment be conducted by HR through the UCPEA.
- Once the review process has started, Human Resources will send paperwork to be completed and submitted back to Human Resources within six weeks. The supervisor will then have four weeks to review and return to Human Resources. Once Human Resources has received the completed paperwork, they will have 12 weeks to provide a written summary of the assessment results.
- Members still have the right to grieve if they don't agree with Human Resources' decision about reclassification. The non-contractual grievance must be filed within 14 days of receiving the decision from Human Resources. Please contact the UCPEA Office and one of our Field Representatives will meet with you to review the steps of the grievance procedure, file the necessary paperwork and guide you through process.

Health Insurance Updates and Information for Retirees

Many members have contacted the UCPEA Office over the last month with questions about their health insurance premiums and retiree health contributions.

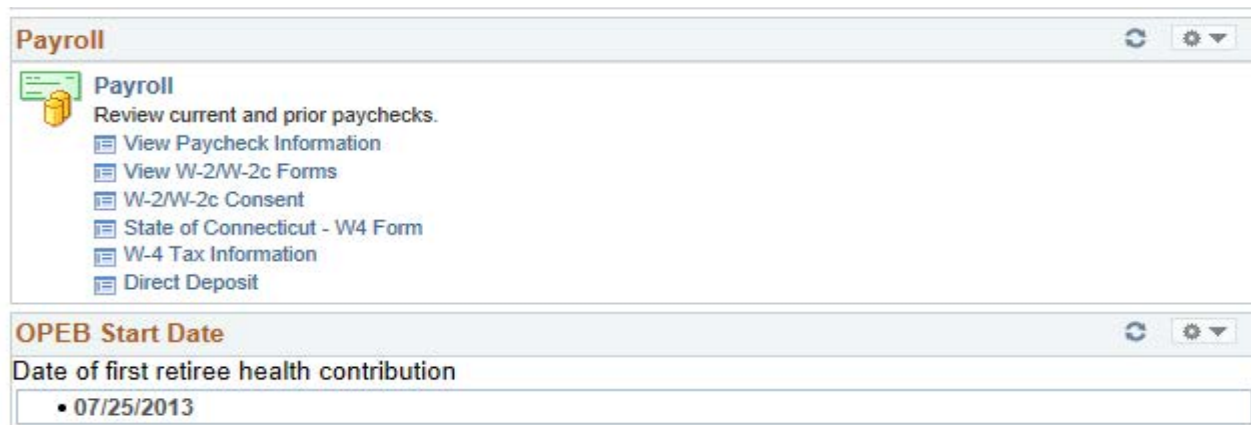
Health Insurance Premiums: You probably saw an increase to your health insurance premium share effective July 1, 2019. According to the 2017 SEBAC Agreement, premium shares for active employees increase by 1% as of July 1, 2019. 1% increases will also happen effective July 1, 2020 and July 1, 2021. None of these increases will raise an employee's premium share to more than 15%.

Retiree Health Contributions: All employees covered by the SEBAC agreement, of which the UCPEA is a part, are responsible for contributing 3% of their gross earnings on a pre-tax basis toward the Retiree Health Fund (RHC). The purpose of the Retiree Health Contribution is to offset the future cost of retiree health benefits. UCPEA covered employees who receive salary increases will also see an increase in their Retiree Health

Contribution because the contribution is a percentage of salary.

According to the University Benefits department, the contribution is tracked by CORE-CT on a monthly basis rather than a per paycheck basis - 10 years or 120 months for employees hired before July 1, 2017 and 15 years or 180 months for employees hired on or after July 1, 2017. Once an employee has reached their 120 or 180 months of required contributions, the deduction will be shut off. Unpaid leaves of absence may extend an employee's contribution until 120 or 180 months of contributions have been made.

Employees who began making Retiree Health Contributions in 2009 will see their deductions end once they've reached their 120 months of contributions. In order to figure out when their deduction started, employees can log in to CORE-CT and now see the date they began making contributions under a new section called, "OPEB Start Date."



UCPEA Joins Labor Call for Sensible Gun Control Laws

UCPEA is joining other unions in calling attention to the role organized labor can play in helping to gain support for sensible gun control legislation in the aftermath of the tragedies in Dayton, Ohio and El Paso, Texas.

"These latest tragic incidents again remind us of the work that still needs to be done in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School killings, which still resonates for the citizens of Connecticut, including members of the UConn community who know families in Newtown," said UCPEA President Mike White.

AFT President Randi Weingarten released the following statement concerning the recent mass shootings in Ohio and Texas:

"We are at a tipping point in America. In a country that has represented tolerance and hope for so many, the 250 shootings this year - on top of so many more in recent memory - have shown no place, not schools, houses of faith, recreational centers, or places where we shop and meet, is

safe from hate in the form of a bullet from a gun. Who will be the next victims of hate crimes and gun violence? Haven't we lost enough innocent souls? Our communities are being terrorized, stoked by words of hatred and division from none other than the president himself. We are a nation in distress, and we must come together to repair what has been broken.

"Ninety-seven percent of Americans support stronger background check laws. Year after year, the data tells us the same thing: Stronger gun safety laws lead to fewer gun violence deaths, yet our hearts tell us that we must do more as the people responsible for caring for others in our community. We must stand up to this cruelty and defend our democracy by getting to know our neighbors and working toward a safer and more just society.

"It is time to name those who stand in the way of that safety: those who put people in harm's way; those who incite hatred and violence with their reckless words *(continue page 4)*

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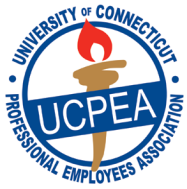
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Sensible Gun Control Laws (cont.)

and demonization of immigrants, African Americans, Muslims, women, the LGBTQ community; and anyone who stands united for a more diverse, pluralistic and accepting world. Their actions are complicit here, and their failure to move on gun safety measures is tacit acceptance of the

danger Americans face from gun violence, and the terrorism of white supremacy that threatens the very ideals of this nation. This cannot be the new normal. We are better than this.

Dates, Deadlines, and Things To Do

Sept. 4, Wed., Union Rep Meeting, SU304B
 Sept. 12, Thurs., Executive Board Meeting, SU320
 Sept. 16, Mon., Union Rep Training, SU310
 Sept. 26, Thurs., Executive Board Meeting, SU410
 Oct. 2, Wed., Union Rep Meeting, SU104
 Oct. 10, Thurs., Executive Board Meeting, Room SU410
 Oct. 14, Mon., Office Closed, Columbus Day
 Oct. 16, Wed., Open House, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
 Oct. 22, Tues., Membership Meeting, SU Theatre
 Oct. 24, Thurs., Executive Board Meeting, Room SU410
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. 15th; Spring Semester – Feb. 28th

Tuition Reimbursement

Reimbursements apply to summer, fall and spring course work

Summer: Sept. 15; Fall Semester: Jan. 15; Spring Semester: June 1