



President's Message

At this time of the year, I typically would be thinking about some brief remarks to make at our annual holiday party and include a moment of reflection so our members would have an opportunity to think about their own year. However, as I now type out my thoughts about 2020 my mind can't even keep up with everything that has transpired.

March 13 was the last day UConn held in-person classes; it was also the day I was told that I may have been exposed to someone who had COVID. I knew very little about COVID then, but I remember the feeling that I got in my stomach. It's still so hard to describe -- confusion, panic, loss for words, clueless about what to do, who to tell. Do I go home? Stay at work? What happens when I get home? Will I get it? How will I feel? It was a panic of the mind. I didn't contract COVID but I learned a valuable lesson that day -- you can't predict how just the news of a potential exposure will make you feel. That is really the narrative of 2020; how the events happening in life are going to make you feel.

2020 has been a year of raw and at times frustrating emotion. With the announcement of the vaccine to help battle the pandemic, I would ask everyone to think about what you are thankful for as we move closer toward a new, and hopefully better, year.

I know what I am thankful for: I am thankful for my wife and my two children, because without them I wouldn't be the person I am today. I am also thankful for my team in Dining Services and the staff we have here to keep moving forward each and every day. I am thankful for the UCPEA Office Staff and all of our members who have stepped into an officer role, steward position or

participated on a committee. I am thankful for all of our members present and past who have been part of the UCPEA membership. UCPEA and its members have continued to do all of the work required to keep UConn running; some have done so virtually, learning how to balance life at home and life at work, but from the same place. Other members have remained on campus and felt the nervousness of being around students and co-workers during a health crises. On behalf of our members, I want to recognize and thank those working on campus since March in several areas: Student Health and Wellness staff, Residential Life, Facilities, CEN-Connecticut Education Network and Environmental Health and Safety.

Many of us have experienced loss in 2020, some of it personal, and I encourage everyone to take one minute of pause while reading this and think about that person(s). The importance of recognizing those we have lost allows us to move forward in the present. Our lives are continually shaped by the people we have let in and when we lose someone we care about they can still guide us through our memories.

For several years now, the signature line on my email has included a thought in Latin from two writers, Theocritus and Cicero: "Dum spiro spero," which means "While I breathe, I hope." It has always held special meaning to me but, during this year, it seems most appropriate. I pray everyone has a safe and healthy winter break.

Sincerely,
Mike White
UCPEA President

Reconsideration Reopening

Over a series of meetings focused around reconsideration timelines in late November and early December, we came to agreement on the issue of reopening reconsideration on job classification, which now will take place from Jan. 4-15.

The purpose of reopening is to allow members an additional opportunity to submit for reconsideration due to all that has happened this year and all of the "pivoting" adjustments we have had to make since the onset of the pandemic.

Reconsideration will only be available to those who did not file during the original reconsideration period over the summer.

UCPEA and Human Resources will meet the third week of January to agree on timelines associated with any requests submitted between Jan. 4-15.

Sick Bank Donations

When completing your Dec. 18-31, 2020 timecard, please consider donating accrued holiday and/or vacation time to the UCPEA Sick Leave Bank. The bank provides additional paid leave to employees covered by the UCPEA Contract who have suffered serious or catastrophic illness or injury and have exhausted all available time.

Directions on how to donate and guidelines for Sick Leave Bank usage are available at www.ucpea.org.

Call for Amendments: Constitution and Bylaws

The deadline for proposing amendments to the UCPEA's Constitution is April 1, 2021. The requirement for this call for amendments and criteria for submitting a proposed amendment is contained in Article XII of the UCPEA's Constitution. The current Constitution and Bylaws can be viewed on the UCPEA webpage: www.ucpea.org.

Proposed amendments can be submitted two ways: through the Constitution and Bylaws Committee or by an individual member

in good standing with signatures of support from at least 3% (currently 57 members) of the membership in good standing.

All proposed amendments or ideas for the committee to consider should be sent to Donald Babcock and Liza Boritz, committee co-chairs at Donald.Babcock@uconn.edu and Liza.Boritz@uconn.edu. Please contact the UCPEA Office with any questions: ucpeaoffice@ucpea.org.

Survey: Over Half of Members Working Remotely Full-time

Nearly 800 members responded to the survey about membership services and professional development activities, indicating a preference for programs focused on career-related topics and self-care, as well as expressing fatigue with virtual meetings.

More than half of respondents said they are remotely working full-time while others are working with a wide variety of work arrangements to keep the University running. UCPEA leadership is examining how to assist members with varied work arrangements. The key findings in the survey included:

- Members are interested in participating in virtual UCPEA events but it mostly depends on the topic and scheduling.
- A majority of respondents indicated a preference for events to take place from noon-1 p.m.

- The top two topics of interests were career-related and self-care programs.
- Members also offered suggestions about helping members and others in need.

"There was an interest in support for helping others during this time," said Jen Morenus, vice president for member services. "One of my favorite suggestions was to encourage staff to thank a co-worker that has helped them in some way. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for doing your part to keep everyone safe and supporting each other."

The Professional Issues Committee will be working to develop career and self-care related events in the spring semester, said Angela Rola, vice president for professional issues.

Dates, Deadlines, and Things To Do

Dec. 23 - Jan. 4, UCPEA Office Closed

Jan. 5, Tues., Finance Committee Meeting, Zoom

Jan. 13, Wed., Union Steward Meeting, Zoom

Jan. 18, Mon., Dr. Martin Luther King Day, Office Closed

Jan. 21, Thurs., Executive Board Meeting, Zoom*

All events and meetings are at noon, unless otherwise noted

**Members in good standing are always invited to attend Executive Board meetings. If you wish to attend, please email ucpeaoffice@ucpea.org for the meeting link.*

REMINDER: Please monitor your vacation, personal leave, holiday and compensatory time balances and make every effort to use your time before it expires.

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

Dependent Tuition Waivers

The benefit applies to Fall & Spring semesters only
Deadlines: Spring Semester – Nov.15

Employee Tuition Waivers

The waiver applies to the Fall and Spring semesters only.
Deadlines: Fall Semester – Oct. 15

Tuition Reimbursement

Reimbursements apply to summer, fall and spring course work
Summer: Sept. 15; Fall Semester: Jan. 15; Spring Semester: June 1