



UNION WIRE

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY

2021

Call for Executive Board and Union Steward Nominations

Election of our union leaders for the next two years will take place in April. The decisions your union leaders make during this term will have a direct impact on your job. All decisions made and programs offered by UCPEA exist because you or one of your colleagues volunteered to help. The strength of the union is what you make it.

Please consider running for a Union Steward or Executive Board position. All positions are open and core responsibilities are briefly described on this page. For a full description of responsibilities and information on stipends for Executive Board positions, see the UCPEA constitution at www.upea.org.

For more information, contact the UCPEA office at ucpeaoffice@ucpea.org.

If you are interested in running for office, or know someone you think would be a good union leader, please submit a nomination at <https://forms.gle/BqsdmhaANsE5Q5zx7>. **The deadline for nominations is March 18, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.**

2021 Election Process & Timeline

MARCH

- Follow-up call for nominations in Wire
- March 18 – Nominations close at 4:30 pm (10 business days prior to the mailing of the ballots on April 1)
- March 22 – Candidate statements due to office by 4:30 pm
- March 24 – Candidate Forum – via Zoom
- March 18 – Recording Secretary presents final slate of candidates to EB

APRIL

- April 1 – Schedule ballots on March 29th. Ballots and statements sent to members via Vote Net
- April 15 – Ballots due to office by COB
- April 20 – Ballots must be certified by the Election and Balloting Committee between April 15-20
 - o If certified on 4/15 – notification to membership must go by 4/29
 - o If certified on 4/16 – notification to membership must go by 4/30
 - o If certified on 4/19 – notification to membership must go by 5/3
 - o If certified on 4/20 – notification to membership must go by 5/4

MAY

- May 6 – President sends a letter of notice calling for a June meeting of the Union Stewards, soliciting nominations and outlining the process for electing a Chief Steward, 10 days before the meeting. Meeting is scheduled for 6/2/21.

All current Union Stewards and members of the Executive Board must be re-nominated if they wish to run.

President: Chief executive officer of the union, oversees UCPEA staff, all union meetings and activities.

First Vice President for Collective Bargaining: Responsible for contract negotiations and administration. In the absence of the president, performs all duties of the president.

Vice President for Professional Issues: Monitors tuition reimbursement and professional development funds, liaison to the Women's Issues Committee.

Vice President for Political Affairs: Organizes election-related, legislative activities and coalition work; monitors budget for committee on Political Education.

Vice President for Social Justice: Responsible for UCPEA's advocacy and leadership of social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion work with members and community affiliates.

Vice President for Communications: Keeps members informed of union issues and events, responsible for Union Wire publication and oversees UCPEA website.

Vice President for Membership Services: Develops and coordinates UCPEA's social activities and events, a liaison to the childcare reimbursement committee.

Secretary: Records minutes at formal meetings, chairs nominating committee, maintains policies and procedures manual.

Treasurer: Serves as chief fiscal officer, chairs finance committee.

Union Stewards: Serves as an advisory group to the Executive Board and as the negotiating committee during contract negotiations. Stewards communicate important UCPEA information to their members. Each area on the Storrs and regional campuses is serviced by at least one Steward.

JUNE

- June 1 – Newly elected union reps take office
- June 2 – Chief Union Steward elected at Union Stewards Meeting
- Officers installed before 7/1/21

JULY

- Newly elected Executive Board members take office on 7/1/21

UCPEA Establishes COVID-19 Assistance Fund

Our survey in November found that our members expressed a desire to help our colleagues who continue to face significant challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UCPEA has set aside funds to provide financial assistance for the relief of extra expenses related to childcare, eldercare, housing, health care, or to help offset a COVID-related loss of income. To prioritize support for those in greatest need, funds will be distributed on a sliding scale based on annual salary.

This award is currently available for FY 2020-21. The Executive Board will decide whether to continue to offer it for future years. This is not an UCPEA contractual benefit, therefore, only dues paying members qualify for these funds.

Awards will range from \$200 to \$500 based on annual salary:

AWARD	SALARY RANGE
\$500	Less than \$45,000
\$400	\$45,000 - \$64,999
\$300	\$65,000 - \$84,999
\$200	\$85,000 - \$99,999

Eligibility for this assistance is as follows:

- Be an UCPEA member in good standing as of Dec. 31, 2020
- Annual salary of less than \$100,000
- Limit of one award per member/family per fiscal year
- Completed application available at: <http://www.ucpea.org> or <https://forms.gle/qpm16xjqzTuMmgNq7>

For more information, go to the UCPEA website or email questions to ucpeaoffice@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 59 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.

AFT-CT Convention Delegates Election

Members who are interested in representing UCPEA as a delegate to the AFT-Connecticut annual business convention on May 1 should contact the UCPEA Office by March 8, 2021 by 4:30 p.m. via email: ucpeaoffice@ucpea.org.

Under our constitution, Union Stewards elect delegates to AFT conventions. Prior to the election, delegate nominees will be invited to the March Stewards meeting and given the opportunity to speak or present a written statement before the election. Nominees who receive votes from the majority of Stewards will be the delegates.

This year the virtual AFT-CT business convention will take place from 9 a.m. to noon.

Meet the Contract Negotiation Team



NEGOTIATION TEAM: L-R
Top Row: Rhonda Ward, Fiona de Merell, Lindsay Jenkelunas, Kathy Fischer

Middle Row: Nikki Eberly, Gina DeVivo Brassaw, Micah Heumann, MiChelle Pereira Lops

Bottom Row: Elizabeth Sullivan, Justin Kyle Tanner, Nishelli Ahmed.

The negotiation team is grateful to everyone who took the time to fill out the recent survey. We received nearly 1,200 responses and this information will help us to identify key issues and areas that are important to members. We will have a membership meeting in the near future and continue to update you as we move through this process. We have assembled a team of members who bring diverse perspectives, expertise and talents to the table:

Nishelli Amhed (she/her) is a Health Educator on the Health Promotion Team in Student Health and Wellness. She is a member of the Social Justice Committee and has been with the university as a graduate student since 2014 and in her professional role since 2017.

Fiona de Merell (she/her) has been at the University since 2007 and is the Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute on the Waterbury campus. She has been an advocate for members as a Steward for more than a decade and most recently has been a member of the classification team.

Gina DeVivo Brassaw (she/her) began her career at UConn in 2005 on the Storrs campus in Community outreach. Two years ago, she left her role as the Associate Director of Community Outreach to assume her current position as the Field Education Coordinator at the School of Social Work.

Nikki Eberly (she/her) has been with the University for more than 16 years and is the Executive Assistant in Veterans Affairs and Military Programs. She previously was a member of the Grievance Team, served as a Steward for a decade and a Social Justice Mediator.

Kathy Fischer (she/her) has been the Associate Director of the Women's Center since she joined the University in 2001 and is the First Vice President of the UCPEA. Prior to her current term, she served three terms on the Executive Board; was a member of the Grievance Team for more than a decade; represented our membership on the Negotiation Team for the 2007 contract; and has served on a variety of committees.

Micah Heumann (he/him) is an Assistant Director in the Academic Center for exploratory Students and Director of The Major Experience and has been at the University almost five years. Micah has served as a Steward for three years and counting and is a co-founder and former member of the UCPEA Social Justice Committee.

Lindsay Jenkelunas (she/her) is the UCPEA Field Representative and has been supporting us for the past six years.

MiChelle Pereira Lopes (she/her) is a Grants & Contracts Specialist in Sponsored Program Services and has been at UConn for 17 years. She has been a Steward for the past decade, a member of the Finance Committee for three years and a member of the Social Justice Committee since its inception.

Elizabeth Sullivan (she/her) is the Executive Director of the UCPEA. She has been with the UCPEA full-time for 12 years and has been guiding us in her current role for seven years.

"Justin Kyle" Tanner (he/him) joined UConn in 2017 as Residence Hall Director and became engaged with the UCPEA as a Steward.

Rhonda Ward (she/her) is an Administrative Program Support II in Industrial Affiliates Program and the Webmaster and Publicist in Institute of Materials Science. She has been at the University for 10 years and is an active Steward.

Mike White (he/him) is the Assistant Director of Dining Services and President of the UCPEA. He has served four terms on the Executive Board, two as the 1st Vice President and two as President, and was a Steward and member of the Grievance Team for many years. Mike served on the Negotiation Team for the 2001 and 2007 contracts and has served on a variety of committees.



Unit 6191
18 Dog Lane
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AFT-CT Hosts Virtual Financial Planning Workshop

AFT-CT is sponsoring a virtual financial planning workshop for its union members on Tuesday, April 6 from 5 to 6 p.m.

The workshop will be led by MJP Wealth Advisors of Farmington and is designed to help members identify their life goals and learn effective financial strategies to help support and achieve them.

To register online for this workshop go to <https://leadernet.aft.org/webform/financial-planning>

Dates, Deadlines, and Things To Do

Mar. 3, Wed., Union Steward Meeting – Zoom

Mar., 4, Thurs., Executive Board Meeting – Zoom

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

- **Professional Development applications are reviewed at the beginning of each month**
- **Childcare Deadlines Jan. – Apr. (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 – November 15

Employee Tuition Waivers

The waiver applies to the Fall and Spring semesters only.

Deadlines: Fall Semester – October 15th

Spring Semester – February 28th

Tuition Reimbursement

Reimbursements apply to summer, fall and spring course work

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

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