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April 24, 2024

University of Alaska Students,

I am writing to share an update on the status of UA's negotiations with the Alaska Graduate Workers Association (AGWA). Negotiations began 3 months ago, and UA is continuing to negotiate in good faith.

Unfortunately, yesterday morning, **AGWA informed us that they intend to strike as soon as Monday, April 29, if we are unable to reach agreement on a contract.** We do not yet know if the strike will occur, or which graduate student workers may strike if it does occur. We also do not believe a strike is legal at this time, and are exploring options available to us to prevent a work stoppage.

This is incredibly disappointing, as the University feels strongly that negotiations are making progress. While we are continuing to negotiate in good faith, the University has an obligation to protect the integrity of our educational mission for the undergraduate student body, and our institutional teaching, research, and service commitments.

I want to assure you that your upcoming Finals next week, commencement exercises, and the posting of final grades in UAOnline will take place on time and as previously scheduled. We are working with your professors and staff members across the system to make sure your experience during this already-stressful time is impacted to as little degree as possible.

Some graduate student employees may choose not to strike, in which case they will be allowed to work. As a system, our door is open to those who plan to be available during this critical time for our students.

UA has and will continue to negotiate in good faith with AGWA to reach a contract that both parties can agree to. While this is a disappointing development, we remain committed to you, your education, and your success at UA.

If you have questions or concerns about your specific courses, please reach out to your professors for guidance and details. Your University and the System Office will continue to communicate directly with you as these developments unfold and will provide further, specific information on commencement-related activities as needed. You can find the most up-to-date information at alaska.edu/gseu.

I hope Finals Week goes well for all of you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul W. Layer".

Paul W. Layer, PhD
Vice President for Academics, Students & Research
University of Alaska