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April 24, 2024

University Leadership, Deans, and Directors,

I am writing to share an update on the status of UA's negotiations with the Alaska Graduate Workers Association (AGWA).

Unfortunately, yesterday morning, **AGWA informed us that they intend to strike as soon as Monday, April 29, if we are unable to ratify a contract.** We do not yet know if the strike will occur, or which graduate student workers may strike if it does occur.

This is incredibly disappointing, as the University feels strongly that negotiations are making progress and that we may be able to reach an agreement in time for monetary terms to be considered by the Legislature this session.

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. Any strike will impact our faculty and staff and may disrupt our undergraduate student experience and research enterprise.

We also do not believe a strike is legal at this time, and are exploring options available to us to prevent a work stoppage. Regardless, **to protect the integrity of operations and minimize disruptions as Finals Week approaches, we are sharing additional, specific guidance and contingency plans with you now.** This guidance is also being shared with students, as well as staff and faculty who supervise graduate students across the system.

Continuity of Operations Expected. It is the University's expectation that our operations - grading, teaching, research assessment, and more - will continue *regardless of a potential strike*. Faculty and staff should begin making plans to ensure that finals, assignment grading, research, commencement activities, and other University operations can continue in the absence of graduate student employees should they choose to strike. Specifically:

- Faculty supervising graduate student employees should:
 - Ensure that all university property and items - including those supporting research - are in faculty hands or secured **by the end of the day Friday, April 26th.**
 - Ensure that they have access to enter final assignment grades as well as post final grades for all classes under their supervision to UAOnline **by the end of the day Friday, April 26th.** We expect that final grades will be posted in UAOnline in accordance with the course catalog.
 - Allow graduate students who choose not to strike and show up to work on Monday morning to continue working.
- Staff supervising graduate student employees should:
 - Ensure that all university property is in staff hands or secured **by the end of the day Friday, April 26th.**

- o Ensure that you have access to any physical or digital documents or other work product required for your departments' operations **by the end of the day Friday, April 26th.**
- o Allow graduate students who chose not to strike and show up to work on Monday morning to continue working.

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 protecting the integrity of our educational mission for our undergraduate students, and upholding our institutional teaching, research, and service commitments. We are also committed to ensuring continuity in teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. Faculty and staff with specific questions should follow the normal process and reach out to their supervisor or dean for further guidance.

We appreciate your leadership, partnership, and commitment to student success. As the situation evolves, we will continue to communicate directly. You can also find the latest and most up-to-date information online at alaska.edu/gseu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul W. Layer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

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