Photo of the Day



The UConn men's basketball team competing against Illinois on Saturday, April 4, 2026. The Huskies won 71-62 and will be advancing to their third national championship game in the past four years. PHOTO BY EMMA MEIDINGER, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Letter to the Editor:

DEAR UCONN–AAUP COLLEAGUES

We, the undersigned, have resigned from the Executive Committee (EC) of UConn-AAUP. We want to share with you why we think this is a critical moment for all of us to scrutinize the work of our union's leaders and take action to reassert that we, the dues-paying members, are the union. After participating in oversight of our union's collective bargaining process, we have concluded that the new contract we will soon be asked to ratify does not represent the best interests of UConn-AAUP members or of quality, affordable public higher education in Connecticut. Moreover, we have found that our union's senior leaders and executive director have consistently worked to exclude rank-and-file members from meaningful participation in the bargaining process, often violating our union's constitution and by-laws in the process. As a result, we plan to vote "no" on the ratification of the tentative agreement for our contract, and we urge all members of UConn-AAUP to do the same.

As educators, researchers, and coaches at UConn, we face enormous challenges related to decisions from our administration, our state government, and the federal government. Currently, UConn-AAUP members face workload increases, program consolidations, and internal and external budget cuts that will irreparably harm faculty research and teaching. We have faced attacks on our academic freedom and the constant threat of federal agents entering our campus and targeting us, our students, or the communities with whom we work. We have colleagues whose jobs are on the line. We know the importance of winning protections in all of these areas right now. Our next contract will govern our working conditions over the next few critical years.

Our union, under its current senior leadership and Executive Director Michael Bailey, has failed to take seriously the multiple crises that we face in this moment of federal attacks on higher education in general and state attacks on public higher education in particular. As the contract bargaining process has dragged on for more than a year, our chief negotiator has made proposals that avoid significant changes to our existing contract, even as our working conditions have deteriorated under that very contract. Our executive director characterizes his approach to bargaining as seeking "win-wins" with the administration and avoiding any proposal or union action that might antagonize the administration. Under this bargaining strategy, no major wins are possible without making major sacrifices. This fundamental misunderstanding of the confrontation that exists between workers and management would be laughable if our livelihoods and working conditions were not on the line.

UConn-AAUP members have every tool workers need to fight for better: an active collective bargaining agreement, dedicated and experienced chapter staff, membership in a larger coalition of 45,000+ unionized state employees and a state government that still enforces labor law and union rights. However, it has become common knowledge within UConn's administration, the state government and our fellow state employee unions that UConn-AAUP is weak. Our union has fallen into a self-destructive pattern: every few years, the union's unelected "experts" carry out contract negotiations behind closed doors, inform members of the results and then invite us to participate in a ritual of consent whereby we ratify whatever contract they present to us.

As union members, we are the experts in our working conditions, wage stagnation, and precarity. To win a strong contract, members must be involved throughout the bargaining process. Unions win when members stand up and take action. These core tenets of democratic unionism are antithetical to the approach of our union's leaders and executive director. When our union began preparing for collective bargaining in Spring 2024, our executive director formed subcommittees of union members to draft bargaining proposals. Under our union's constitution, these proposals should have been fully drafted by the subcommittees, considered and approved by our Contract Committee and Executive Committee, reviewed by the full membership and then sent to our fellow union members on our Negotiating Team to be passed to the administration's negotiators.

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Instead, our executive director — serving simultaneously as our chief negotiator in violation of our chapter constitution — instructed these subcommittees to draft only general proposals like "job security" and "teaching/service workload." This process concentrated power in the hands of our executive director to decide which proposals to make and which proposals to set aside. When members defied these instructions and drafted proposals around workload and immigration protections, among other issues, our executive director simply set those proposals aside. Meanwhile, our executive director has proposed new contract language on uniform "instructional workload units" that threatens to increase workloads for many members simply due to his failure to grasp the reality of our working conditions.

Given the lack of oversight and democracy, we believe our union is in a crisis of legitimacy and must change course urgently and decisively. By voting no we reject the insufficiencies of the status quo and send a message to the UConn administration and our union: do better. Instead of building a strategy to win, our union leadership has collectively refused to confront our campaign's shortcomings or hold our chief negotiator and the UConn administration to account.

When each of us joined the EC, we envisioned building the union we all deserve by organizing and keeping rank-and-file members informed and engaged. You might have perceived this change in our union's posture in recent years. Through coalition-building and member-led organizing, our union was finally taking steps to confront the UConn administration at and beyond the negotiating table. Following in the model of many unions who have fought before us, we were hopeful that we could win the working conditions, salaries, and job security we all deserve.

During the Feb. 20 EC meeting, our continued membership on the Executive Committee became unconscionable for two reasons. First, the union's senior leaders blocked our efforts to discuss concerns about the lack of democratic oversight of the bargaining process and of the union's stewardship of members' dues. Our union's president, with the support of the executive vice president and past president, repeatedly violated parliamentary procedure and offered arbitrary rules to cut off the conversation.

Second, the Executive Committee voted against signing a student-led petition demanding the UConn administration implement basic protections from the threats of federal anti-immigrant forces on campus. These demands were, in our view, the bare minimum, and they aligned with our union's own demands at the bargaining table to protect our members. We were appalled not only because our union was refusing to support students' demands for safety on campus, but also because our own union had just collected data showing how immigration threats were harming our own members. This data had been shared with EC members already and reiterated at the Feb. 20 meeting. Unfortunately, our union's decision to sacrifice immigrant and international workers and students was confirmed at the bargaining table on March 10, when our negotiating team dropped all proposals for immigration protections.

Our union's lack of clarity on the responsibility of unions to protect all members and on the importance of building coalitions within our communities, rather than with our opponents, confirmed the inadequacy of our current union leadership. With these actions, UConn-AAUP's senior leaders have proven that they lack the interest and preparation to confront the present crises affecting our members and broader communities. Without clear and decisive change, our union will continue to waste every opportunity to demand better. By voting against the ratification of the forthcoming tentative agreement, we will vote for this change. We will vote for the opportunity to continue fighting for our jobs, our wages, our working conditions, our research, our colleagues, our students, our communities, and our belief that a better university is possible.

In solidarity,

Sam Sommers, Josh Mayer, and César Abadía