

# UMN AFSCME Bargaining Update October 21, 2021

## Video Update Full Transcript

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(Cherrene Horazuk) Greetings from your joint U of M AFSCME bargaining committee. We have had two scheduled days of bargaining this month - October 12 and 20. We believed that we made progress on a number of proposals on October 12, so we were hopeful we would reach a tentative agreement yesterday, but we have just not seen sufficient movement from the U on our core issues. Yesterday at the end of the day of bargaining, we let the University know that we will be requesting mediation and then, last night, we formally submitted that request.

(Will Clashes) We had hoped to be done bargaining and back to our jobs and other union work in September. We moved forward on proposals of all sorts and have dropped almost 50 proposals since bargaining started in June. Those proposals were important topics and were put forward to protect AFSCME workers and the broader University community, but we understand that bargaining requires a certain amount of compromise. Unfortunately, the University has barely budged since June.

(Andrea Sande) There have been some wins addressing workplace inequity issues and we have tentative agreements to create three new ongoing Labor-Management Committees: one on Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Rights, one to address bullying and creating a Respectful Workplace, and one on Addressing Systemic Racism in Hiring Practices. These committees, accompanied by ongoing workplace organizing, have the potential to make progress on addressing inequality at the U.

(Sarah Vast) We believe we are down to our core demands of

- Flexible Work with a Real Appeals Process that protects workers from supervisors who arbitrarily deny requests,
- Real Raises that keep us from falling behind, and
- Essential Worker pay and recognition.

These are the priorities we've been fighting for at the table and that you - AFSCME members - set. You've been strong in fighting for these priorities publicly - at the Rally at Coffman, at the Board of Regents Meeting, and, just this week, at the Boynton Picket. We are still committed to making real progress on these top priorities.

(Mahva Jones) Instead of meeting us in compromise, the U has refused to move on any of the remaining core issues. They have not moved on wages even once and have instead stuck to the insult of 1.5% wage increases for only one year. Rising inflation for essential items like food, gas, heating and other utilities will more than eat up a 1.5% increase for folks who make on average \$45,000 a year. We need to move forward, not backwards.

(Geraldine Hughes) The University has also tried to pressure us into accepting an inadequate deal by threatening to withhold retroactive pay increases because bargaining is "taking so long." Yet, it is the University who cancelled a whole day of bargaining due to unpreparedness. It is the University who repeatedly passed documents to us with confusing

mistakes or with proposals completely reordered, making it difficult and time-consuming to track their positions on the issues. It is the University who frequently took hours on bargaining days, stalling multiple times, to return with the same answers, “No!” or “It’s Managerial Rights to ...”

(Rob Hietala) In fact, on October 20, they took FOUR hours to respond to two proposals that had minor changes on our end. They took four hours to say No. We know that the University has budgeted for salary increases from the first day of the fiscal year. It is unacceptable that they would threaten to withdraw retro pay on increases that are already minimal when they are dragging out each session.

(Deb Pavlica) The University continues to refuse to provide any type of financial acknowledgement or recognition to the healthcare workers at Boynton Health and CUHCC, who have risked their lives since day one of the pandemic, testing and treating students and community members who have COVID. We modified our proposal for essential worker pay to provide lump sum bonuses rather than ongoing pay, but the U still refuses to discuss.

(Chi Phung) They also refuse to discuss market adjustments for LPNs and CMAs, who have been working tirelessly, short-staffed, in order to keep the rest of the University safe. They deserve to be paid fairly for their sacrifices and to have starting wages that attract new hires and ensure safe and responsible staffing.

(Dom Fritzke-Brenny) The University’s lack of movement on key issues along with their decision to drag out bargaining has left us with no choice but to involve a mediator. Mediation has typically been the last step in our bargaining process. We did not need a mediator to reach an agreement for our last contract and we had been hopeful that it would not be necessary this time. However, we believe a mediator will be helpful in moving our process forward more quickly and systematically.

(Rosetta Cheers) Next week, we will be hosting virtual bargaining update sessions to go more in-depth on the status of the proposals still on the table, and how members can support the bargaining process. Dates and times for the sessions are included in this email and the video description below. We hope you will attend those sessions -- bring coworkers, and bring any questions you have. When we fight, we win!