United Campus Workers of Georgia

New Member Packet

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1. Introduction👋😊

This is a lot of info! You might not read all this right now, reference this document as needed!

Some things to know:

- We don't have a huge full time staff like some unions! We function by everybody doing what they think needs doing/working together.
- ***We are not a "service union." Any help UCW-GA provides is the work of "we the workers" ourselves.***
- *We fight for the right to collectively bargain for better terms of employment.*
- ***We are a "non-majority union." We are community builders****. We create and build communities of USG staff, student workers, and faculty members for the purpose of collectively acting in mutual defense for the good of us all.*

2. What is United Campus Workers?🔎

United Campus Workers (UCW) is a labor union representing higher education employees at public institutions across 13 states. We aim to build power for workers on the CSU campus by advocating for better wages, benefits, working conditions, and job security.

UCW is a wall-to-wall union, meaning undergraduate and graduate workers, staff, and faculty are all eligible to join. Essentially, **as long as you get a CSU paycheck, you can become a union member!**

If you are not a public university employee, you can still join UCW as a community supporter.

UCW is a member-run, member-funded organization with modest, income-based dues set on a sliding scale. The funds go into a democratically controlled pot that your chapter decides how to spend--usually on materials, coordinating events, and other campaign efforts.

The current dues scale is as follows:

- Part-time employees, graduate students, retirees, and community supporters - $8/month
- Full-time employees making under $60,000 - $14.50/month
- Full-time employees making between $60,000 and $99,999 - $30/month
- Full-time employees making over $100,000 and $99,999 - $50/month

3. History of United Campus Workers 📚

(from official UCW-CWA website)

In the 1980s, state employees without formal bargaining rights in Texas, Oklahoma, and Missouri organized with Communication Workers of America (CWA) on a mass scale, realizing public worker rights and material gains. Following a Living Wage Campaign in the 2000s, the United Campus Workers of Tennessee declared together, “we are a union.”

Since then we have expanded our reach and won victories big and small, including the stopping of outsourcing of thousands of facilities services workers across TN’s public higher education institutions, to securing full fee waivers for graduate

students at CU Boulder. We've stopped harassment from abusive supervisors, and changed the culture of many of our workplaces and departments.

Our movement across U.S. campuses continue to grow. Today UCW spans the nation, with campus workers in Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin joining Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee in the South. United Campus Workers is now more than 7,000 members strong, and we continue in our efforts to organize, fight, and win.

While we do not currently have the legal right to bargain with our employers in all the states we represent, this is only one method workers have historically used to raise their voices and make change at work.

Many issues unite us, and right now our members across the country are rallying behind causes such as:

- A living wage of $20+/hour base pay for all campus workers
- Elimination of student fees for graduate workers
- Health insurance subsidization for graduate workers
- Increase in stipends for graduate workers
- Cost of living adjustments for all campus workers
- Increases in minimum per-class rates for non-tenure track professors

4. Recent Victories 🏆

These are selected victories. You can read a list of more victories prior to 2024 here.

A. In Georgia (selected)

- **Aug. 2025**: CSU Counseling Department raises Federal Work Study wages from $8/hr to $10/hr

- **2020-2025**: Cost of Living Adjustments (raises!) for all public university employees
  Before 2020, USG did not provide Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs). Inflation soared during the pandemic, and UCW members demanded COLAs. As a result, USG employees have received COLAs during fiscal years 2020-2025.

- **2022**: Eliminated $450/semester "special institution fee" for all students
  The "special institution fee" was something all USG students, including graduate students, had to pay prior to 2022. It was unclear as to where this money was going

to. UCW members looked into it and discovered that part of the fee was going to graduate student stipends, meaning that grad students were essentially paying part of their own income. UCW successfully eliminated the fee in 2022, saving all undergraduate and graduate students nearly $1,000 each academic year.

- **2020**: Implemented mask mandate during height of pandemic
  UCW-GA wins mask mandate after petition with more than10,000 signatures and significant press attention

B. In the Southeast (selected)

- **2025**: University of Tennessee-Knoxville raises minimum stipend for 9-month graduate workers to $26,496; and for 12-month workers to $35,328!

- **2023**: Graduate workers at the University of Virginia fought back against late paychecks and win

- **2022**: University of Southern Mississippi achieved a minimum wage increase for all benefit-eligible, hourly workers

5. UCW Structure 🧱

- **A full explanation of UCW-GA's structure, including how UCW-GA relates to UCWSE and to CWA, can be found in this slideshow:** Know Your Union

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)

The **AFL-CIO** is a national trade union center that is the largest federation of unions in the United States. It is a democratic, voluntary federation of 63 national and international labor unions that represent nearly 15 million working people.

Communication Workers of America (CWA)

CWA is the largest communications and media labor union in the US. It has about 700,000 members. CWA is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO. As a UCW-GA member, you are also a member of CWA.

United Campus Workers Southeast (UCWSE) is a chapter—also known as a "Local"—of CWA. Our Local was created in 2024 when United Campus Workers of Georgia merged with UCW chapters in Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina.

United Campus Workers of Georgia (UCW-GA) is a division of CWA Local 3821. We are made up of UCW-GA chapters based at various USG schools, plus standing committees and working groups including campaigns.

- Information about UCW-GA's most active chapters, including their contact information and social media links, can be found at: **https://ucwga.com/chapters**
- Information about UCW-GA's "standing" (that is, permanent) committees, including committee contact information, can be found at: **https://ucwga.com/committees**



6. UCW-GA Resources & Contact Sheet ☎️

Click the link below to see the most up-to-date version of the UCW-GA Resources and Contact Sheet: Resources & Contacts (UCW-GA) . This contact sheet will help you get in touch with UCW-GA and UCWSE leadership.

If you are looking to get in contact with your fellow union members and stay up to date with current union events, please follow our Instagram page!

Additionally, you may also use ActionBuilder to look up member contact information. Please see the ActionBuilder section of the handbook for more information.

7. Know your Rights as a Public Employee 📜

You have the right to FREE SPEECH.
Public employees do not give up their right to free speech. While your employer may regulate what you say under your official duties, they may not punish you for speaking as a private citizen on matters of public concern. Commenting on your employer's practices and their effect on the community is protected speech. You can exercise your FREE SPEECH on your own time by:

- Handing out fliers
- Peacefully picketing
- Non-violent demonstrations

You have the right to FREE ASSOCIATION.
Your employer cannot discipline or retaliate against you for membership in most organizations–this is you exercising your right to FREE ASSOCIATION.

- **You have the right to join a union.**
- You have the right to organize and seek improvement of your terms and conditions of employment.
- You have the right to run for public office if your salary is not paid entirely from federal funds.

You have the right to DUE PROCESS.
Tenure and requirements for disciplinary hearings or notices give you DUE PROCESS rights. If state law or employer policies require certain procedures be followed before you are terminated, then these rights are enforceable under the U.S. Constitution.

- Grievance procedures
- Pre-termination hearings
- Anti-retaliation policies

You have rights under FEDERAL LAW.
Certain federal laws, such as the Civil Rights Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and the Family Medical Leave Act, grant rights to employees that are enforceable in federal courts, even if Georgia does not offer the same protections.

- Freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability
- Overtime for non-educators and non-“white collar” employees
- Leave time for childbirth or adoption, serious medical conditions, or to care for a spouse, child, or parent.

8. Training Opportunities 🏋️

UCW offers free training sessions for anyone interested in learning more about unions and labor organizing:

- **https://ucw-cwa.org/training**