

**UFAS Steering Committee Report on the End Worker Intimidation campaign**  
**Delivered by UFAS President Chad Alan Goldberg**  
**UFAS General Membership Meeting, November 9, 2017**

At the Steering Committee's November 2<sup>nd</sup> [2017] meeting, we discussed the progress of our union's End Worker Intimidation campaign. At the end of that discussion, the Steering Committee asked me to prepare the following report on the campaign. Since this is the third general membership meeting where we have discussed the campaign, I won't repeat what has been said in previous reports. Instead, this report will summarize what the campaign has accomplished.

From its inception, the campaign had three legs: 1) the grievance process, 2) a petition, and 3) media publicity.

**The Grievance Process:** When ESL management informed UFAS members and longtime ESL instructors Alyssa Franze and Jambul Akkaziev that they would not be appointed to new lecturer positions created as a result of our Fair Pay for Faculty Assistants campaign, Alyssa decided to file a grievance.

Our constitution specifies that UFAS shall have a standing Grievance Committee. At present, we do not have a Grievance Committee chairperson. However, several UFAS members generously volunteered their time and energy to help Alyssa with her grievance.

[Academic Staff Policies & Procedures chapter 7](#) allows academic staff to grieve actions that are "arbitrary, capricious, ... prohibited by law, or in violation of ASPP." In May 2017, Alyssa filed a grievance in accordance with chapter 7 "concerning an arbitrary and premature denial of reappointment ... for the Summer and Fall 2017 terms." Alyssa's grievance letter pointed out several irregularities. Among them, she was told before summer enrollments for ESL courses were finalized that she would not be hired to teach in the summer; she was given shifting, inconsistent, and unsubstantiated reasons for this decision; and she was told that she was unqualified for the new lecturer positions in ESL before the official PVL for these positions was issued.

Alyssa's grievance letter did not ask that she be hired as an ESL lecturer. All it asked for was that her "application be judged fairly and completely and that [her] experience in and contributions to the ESL Program [be] fully considered." Because of her five-year experience in and service to the program, Alyssa also requested that she "receive an explanation in writing should [she] be denied future appointment in the ESL Program."

A grievance letter first goes to the department chair or unit head. The department chair's decision can then be appealed to the dean, and then ultimately to the Academic Staff Appeals Committee. Alyssa's grievance has now gone through all of these stages. At the final stage, the university's lawyers submitted a motion to dismiss her grievance on the grounds that she was no longer employed in the ESL program and therefore had no standing. On October 17, the Academic Staff Appeals Committee dismissed her grievance. This is a very troubling development because it means in practice that management can deny reappointment to many

**UFAS Steering Committee Report on the End Worker Intimidation campaign**  
**Delivered by UFAS President Chad Alan Goldberg**  
**UFAS General Membership Meeting, November 9, 2017**

academic staff for any reason or for no reason at all. This opens the door wide for anti-union intimidation of workers on campus.

**The Petition:** Our union encouraged Alyssa to go through the grievance process in order to show that we had tried official channels. However, we knew that ASP&P provides very few due process rights to fixed-term terminal academic staff, and therefore we did not expect the grievance to be successful. The second leg of the campaign was therefore a petition to publicize anti-union intimidation of workers on campus and mobilize the support of other employees, students, alumni, and community members. The petition called for “the full reinstatement of UFAS members Alyssa Franze and Jambul Akkaziev to the English as a Second Language Program and for an end to worker intimidation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.”

The goal that we set for ourselves at the beginning of the fall term was to gather 500 signatures by the end of the term. The petition has been highly successful: in just ten weeks, we have collected, online and on paper, over 500 signatures (including new signatures added as recently as this week). The signatories include academic staff, faculty, university staff, students, and alumni of UW–Madison and UW–Extension; members of other labor unions; and concerned supporters in Wisconsin and nationwide. The TAA, AFSCME Local 2412 (representing university staff), and the Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice have also endorsed the petition. Such broad support from so many campus and community stakeholders signals a strong concern about employees’ due process rights, job security, and working conditions on our campus.

Having exceeded our goal of 500 signatures, the Steering Committee decided last Thursday [November 2, 2017] to close the online petition. Our original intent had been to deliver the petition to the ESL Program Director and to L&S Dean Karl Scholz. However, some members of our union expressed concern that delivering the petition signatures might open some of the signers to retaliation. Taking these concerns into consideration, the Steering Committee decided instead to send a [letter to the Provost](#) that informs her about the strong support our petition has garnered. The letter also draws her attention to the persisting pay inequities and precarious job situations that many UW–Madison employees continue to experience, as well as to our right to criticize these conditions without retaliation.

**Media Publicity:** The third and last leg of our campaign has been media publicity. Our petition attracted broad support because we publicized it effectively—through our own membership meetings, organizing conversations with colleagues, presentations to shared governance bodies that previously endorsed our Fair Pay for Faculty Assistants campaign, social media, and the press.

After we posted the petition on the UFAS Facebook page, it was shared 32 times. Among the groups sharing it were AFT-Wisconsin, the TAA, the South Central Federation of Labor, AFSCME Wisconsin Retirees Chapter 32, Rutgers AAUP-AFT, Tenure for the Common Good, and United Faculty and Staff of UW-Eau Claire. Many individual UFAS members shared it as well.

**UFAS Steering Committee Report on the End Worker Intimidation campaign**  
**Delivered by UFAS President Chad Alan Goldberg**  
**UFAS General Membership Meeting, November 9, 2017**

We also publicized our End Worker Intimidation Campaign through conventional media, including *The Daily Cardinal*, WORT-FM's Labor Radio, the nonprofit *Labor Notes*, the national AFT Voices blog, and the *Cap Times*.

In the end, Alyssa and Jambul were not reinstated to the ESL Program. None of us ever thought that reinstatement was likely. Nevertheless, the Steering Committee considers the End Worker Intimidation campaign a success in at least four ways.

First, it effectively raised awareness and educated our colleagues about the problem of intimidation on campus, spurring a broader public discussion within and outside of shared governance bodies about this problem.

Second, our union showed that it will stand with members—especially our most vulnerable members—when they experience retaliation. When we ask non-members to support or get involved in union activities, we can't guarantee that they will always be safe from intimidation by their managers and supervisors. But we have demonstrated that they won't face intimidation alone. This is critical for our future organizing efforts.

Third, the End Worker Intimidation campaign has built our union's capacity, strengthening our ties to other unions both on and off campus in ways that will serve us well in the future. The TAA (representing graduate student employees), AFSCME Local 171, and AFSCME Local 2412 (representing university staff) gave our campaign especially strong support—in part, I think, because their own members know the problem of intimidation first-hand and all too well. We know that we can count on their support in the future—and in return we should remember to support them when they need it.

Fourth, the campaign has spurred discussion within our own union about the need to amend ASP&P to strengthen the due process rights of academic staff on campus. If successful, such changes would benefit all academic staff, not only those in ESL. This may well be the direction our future efforts will take if members so choose.

The Steering Committee thanks all of our members who contributed to the success of the End Worker Intimidation campaign.