

UE-YEAH!

Here are 10 ways the UEA has your back, not the top 10, not the only 10, just 10 exemplary reasons why you should support fully the work your union is doing.

- 1) Recently negotiated multi-year contracts for term faculty
- 2) Death benefit for dependents of members
- 3) A policy regarding non-sexual harassment
- 4) Choice to spread sabbatical salary reduction over 2 years
- 5) Specified workload limits, with attendant overload pay
- 6) A full semester of paid parenthood for birth mothers
- 7) Higher salary floors
- 8) Reasonable summer salary pay and commitments
- 9) Salary increases for all eligible members
- 10) Promotion and tenure decided at campus level

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# THE UNION CALLER

## “The Trust Issue”

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Issue 1

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### A Story About What the UEA Did for Me (and for You)



Rebecca De Souza

*What We Think*

People tend not to join or participate in unions because of ideological differences. I cannot speak for all unions, but what I can say is that UMD’s UEA officers have fought tirelessly to secure for women, the right to take time off from work at the birth of a child. I had heard from colleagues that UMD “was good” with maternity leaves, which reassured me to no end at a time when I was facing a grueling pregnancy. But I soon began to wonder why people had said this to me. After scrambling around for information (yes, this was the first time that I opened up my copy of the Collective Bargaining Agreement), I learned that the UEA contract provided me with two less than perfect options. The first option offered me six weeks of leave at the birth of my child and the second option was stated in the following manner: “Upon request and with the consent by the Principal Administrator, a female member shall be entitled to a three month leave with salary during the semester of her child’s birth or the following semester, if the member agrees to a teaching load of a total of 3-5 credits beyond the member’s normal load to be taught within 2 semesters of the birth”. (Collective Bargaining Agreement, Effective July 2009-June 2012, italics added) In other words, I could take three months leave when my baby was born, but would have to make up an extra course the year after. I eventually chose the latter, but it was a decision fraught with turmoil. Very quickly, I realized that this particular UEA clause was interpreted differently by decision-makers across campus and therefore women received a different set of benefits from

with my research and service during this unwieldy time frame. This was also what several of my colleagues had done in the past. So imagine my surprise when the following suggestions were seriously bandied about: I teach a highly intense hybrid class for four weeks, which would meet for four hours a day; I teach an online course, which could start at the beginning of the semester and then finish right around finals week (because the three months would be “up” by then). I was devastated that these “options” were even part of the conversation. In the end, I was not made to teach a course, instead it was decided that I would prepare the program evaluation for my department, an onerous task in itself, but a big relief after the inane conversations about intensive courses. The next horror came after the birth of my baby boy. Since I opted for taking three months leave, as per the contract, I was required to take on an extra course the following year. This meant that only six months after my son was born in addition to my regular teaching load, I was teaching an extra course. It struck me as strange that at a time when every ounce of my creative, intellectual, and physical energy should have been directed towards my child; here I was in the unventilated spaces of A.B. Andersen working more. My husband who also works at UMD was struck by the irony; he did not suffer the physical pain of the pregnancy, nor the 18 hours of labor, nor the emergency C-section, nor the hard work of feeding and nurturing a new born, yet he continued to teach his regular load that year, while I taught an extra course. The mantra seemed to be: Here, go birth your baby, take the three months leave and be very grateful for it, but when you get back we will wring extra work out of you to make up for it. This is not “valuing diversity”, this is not “Strategic Plan, Goal 2”, and this is certainly not equity. No, this to me felt like the cold calculus of a short-sighted business transaction. I came dangerously close to quitting my job at the time and becoming the dreaded statistic of women who drop out of the workforce. How shameful that this should happen in the wealthiest nation on earth. Now these may all sound like reasons not to become full members of UEA or participate in its discussions, but read page 40 of the most recent Collective Bargaining Agreement. When I did, it sent a chill down my spine. First, it no longer lists the absurd six week option. Second, it guarantees a full semester of leave as seen here: “a female Member, as a result of a birth of her child, may request a leave of up to the equivalent of a semester in duration during the semester of her child’s birth of the following semester” (Collective Bargaining Agreement, July 2014-2017, italics added). I was stunned by the simplicity of this contract language. It sits there so simply as if it were nothing. And this is indeed the reason I tell this story. Unless you know the turmoil that came before, it is easy to miss the revolution in the understated simplicity of this one sentence. If this particular contract was in effect at the time I was pregnant, it would have made a world of difference to me and my family. I would not have had to negotiate for a favorable interpretation of the clause, I could have requested up to a semester of leave without having it squeezed out of me later, and I would not have had to spend a year of my life worried about leave-related issues and caught up in a slew of undignified conversations –just to defend my most basic human rights. I now realize, with awe, that each article and each clause in the UEA contract could probably be traced back to a personal story like mine, or more likely a set of stories. But of course, this is not every pregnant woman’s story at UMD. I heard from female colleagues about the wonderful experienc-



Dominic De Souza

the same contract language. In my case, since the contract stipulated a total of three months, not the entire semester, the question that decision-makers grappled with was this: What work can Rebecca do between Jan 22nd, 2012 and March 5th, 2012, the projected due date, so as not to go over the three months of leave? As a faculty member, my job involves a complex balance of teaching, research, and service, so for me the obvious answer was to forge ahead

### Who We Are (2014)

#### UMD

- Established in 1895 as a normal school
- 1947 becomes coordinate campus with the University of Minnesota
- 14 bachelor degrees in 185 majors and 69 minors available to choose from

#### People at UMD:

- 1,949 people
- 513 full-time faculty
- 236 full-time professional academic and administrative staff
- 112 part-time faculty

- 11,093 students enrolled
- 60,000 UMD graduates total
- Per-credit tuition rates:  
Undergrad: 450.76\$ (resident)  
591.73\$ (non-resident)

#### People at UMD (continued):

- 49 part-time professional academic and administrative staff
- 792 full-time/part-time civil service employees



serving UMD with all our faculty

Facebook Link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/419009304846899/?fref=ts>

UEA Contracts can be found at:

<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/policies/governing/unit9contract/duluth/index.html>

es they had with their own pregnancies, one was allowed to combine maternity leave with a single-semester leave, others were back at work the next week (voluntarily!), some had stories that made mine pale in comparison, and many women told me many times about how lucky I was because in their time there was no such thing as maternity leave. Yes, in the long bleak light of history, I was lucky. I, a woman, a woman of color, and an immigrant, was able to put my formal work on hold for three months to do the informal work of caring for my infant. Even more amazing, today, four years later, all families at UMD have it slightly better. The revised language allows far less room for unfavorable interpretations. This tiny little sentence on page 40 affords us the right to work and the right to be unapologetic about needing time to work for our newborns. Because of this revision, it is my hope that pregnant female faculty at UMD – term and tenured - will be treated in a more dignified manner. But to be clear, the fact that we have this benefit today is not luck. It is the hard work of people coming together, listening and telling their stories, asking the dangerous questions, and speaking up against networks of oppression- often at risk to themselves. And while we are nowhere close to genuine equity for women in the workplace (unequal pay, unsubsidized child, and garden-variety patriarchy continue to plague our careers), this tiny change is a step in the right direction of history. I am also left with a bit of hope that there are visionary leaders out there who agreed to this change in the contract. My beautiful son Dominic Elijah was born on a Leap Day and in a few short months will celebrate his fourth (or first) birthday. On this joyous occasion, I would like to thank the UEA for fighting for me, my family, and other families who call UMD their home. And no, this is not about ideology; this is -and was -very real to me.

### How You Should Read This Issue

Aaron Boyson

Leave it to a Communication professor to try to tell you how to read something, to try to dictate how you should be in receipt of a message. Call it an occupational hazard. But you hold a new newsletter format (not even sure it is a newsletter). You should

see right above this paragraph a new UEA logo. You should see that the issue is themed, in this case, “The Trust Issue.” You should see more pictures of people, graphs of things. That’s a lot of newness. As editor, it is my hope that this refreshment to the UEA communication portfolio is valuable to you. Not surprisingly, that old saw, “If you’re not outraged, you’re not paying attention” drives the content selection, as it relates both to unfolding events at UMD, the University system, and here and there, academia in general. If I were writing to anyone other than a group of professors, I would invite you to think of yourselves as editors of this publication. Alas, I know you will. I especially encourage any and all theme or story ideas. If you would like to write a column like Dr. de Souza’s contribution here, please let me know. This publication is as much about transmitting faculty voices as it is UEA’s agenda. And that brings me to my last dictate, which gets to how you should view the new logo. It has been a pleasant surprise to be an Executive Committee member. Sure, the UEA is like a kind of firewall against unsavory intrusions on faculty life. People get that much, I suspect. The UEA is also a stalwart custodian of the idea of a university. We hold as axiomatic the idea that when our faculty are as free as possible to flourish, the University strengthens. So in one rendition of the new logo, I tried to play off that old maxim, “a rising tide lifts all boats” by writing something like “a rising faculty lifts all hopes.” Not the wrong sentiment, but too campy, too forced. Instead, what you see above is intended to more plainly convey what I have witnessed, which is a fierce commitment to the idea of a university, of this University, not only to its faculty. The UEA is about UMD. Period. Hence the logo is designed to conflate visually “The U” with “UEA,” to capture this fact. A host of instances of this commitment happen almost every meeting I attend, sometimes in such profound ways, honestly, I have been moved to goose bumps by the level of dedication my colleagues have to this place, and to the students we serve. I doubt that this issue will move you to goose bumps, but lend us your eye and your time and let’s see.

### “Crumpled?” and More on Backside!

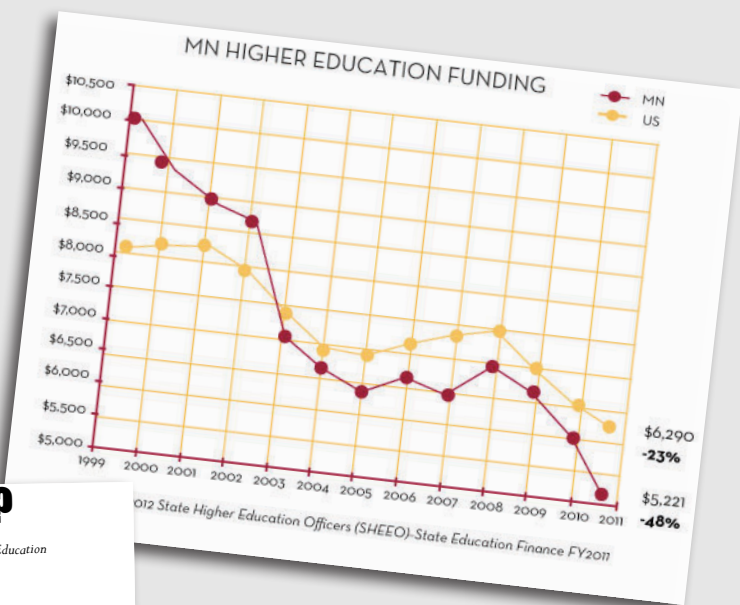
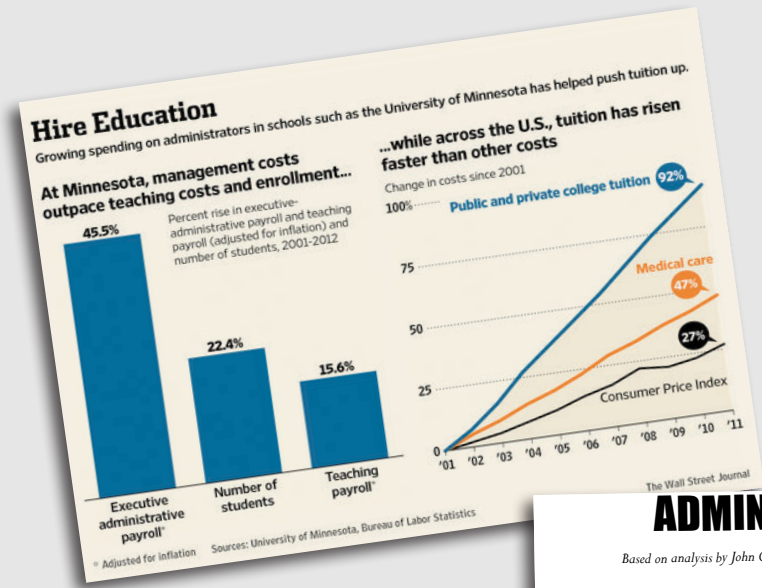


serving UMD with all our faculty



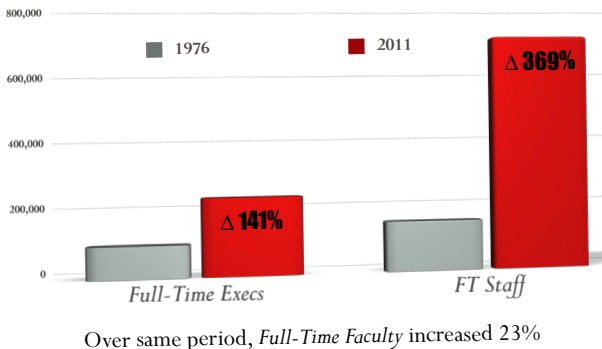
# THE UNION CALLER

## The Big Picture (in pictures)



## ADMINISTRATIVE PRIORITIES?

Based on analysis by John Curtis of U.S. Colleges & Universities, published in the Chronicle of Higher Education



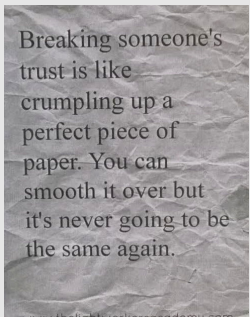
## Crumpled?



John Hamlin

Processing the scandal that has befallen Volkswagen recently, I was reminded that I once worked as a sand-blaster and spray painter for a small company that was found to use, shall we say, not quite up to snuff concrete in their building material. Innocent mistake or calculated misdeed, trust in this company fell immediately and drastically. They tried to apologize, but it was recognized by most as a way to displace blame and it fell on deaf ears. The company went out of business. They might have saved themselves had they shown their concern to the public, had they started rebuilding confidence by dismissing the manager in charge of operations. But they chose not to

do that. The person in charge was the son of the owner. They thought they could continue with business as usual and the public would forgive and forget. Things did not turn out as they had hoped. Lately, UMD has been spiraling downward in what appears to be its own crisis of confidence in leadership. When mistakes happen idiosyncratically, of course a “we need to stick together” approach is mandated. Reasonable people understand that mistakes happen. A simple “sorry, meant no harm, trust me we can get through this” approach is



all that is needed. But when mistakes accumulate into an avalanche of dilemmas, what then? The problem with a rash of mistakes is that they begin to appear systematic. Otherwise benign errors start to seem malignant. To many both on and off campus, it now seems that missteps at

multiple levels of administration is the “new normal.” Such normality metastasizes into fear and mistrust. From within our ranks, this much is evident from recent campus climate survey results. Reminds me too of the old adage, “trust is like a sheet of paper, once it’s crumpled, it can’t be perfect again.” So how does UMD become a place where we again want to work and feel proud of being part of this institution? As impertinent as it may seem, I suggest that a new foundation of trust must be poured, not with words, but with deeds. Herodotus once said, “Men trust their ears less than their eyes.” Perhaps this means new leadership. It took very little time for Volkswagen to make this decision in the wake of their scandal. I do not mean to imply that the situation at UMD is the same as what Volkswagen has done, but there is a time when restoring trust with new leadership becomes necessary. Every organization that goes through crisis grapples with the timing of this hard truth. Every organization has to recognize when the time is right to prioritize the trust of those who conduct the work of the business, instead of protecting those who manage the business of the work.

Mired as we are in the context of mistrust and uncertainty here at UMD, I read the quote below in Inside Higher Education (October, 25th, 2015 issue) from Mary Churchill with, honestly, a little jealousy. Churchill is an administrator. She is associate provost at Salem State University. And she said this about working with faculty there.

“... one of the key advantages of working with tenured faculty -we have unlimited access to smart people who are not afraid to challenge us. If, as a sector, we could only get to the place where we see this as a strength, an asset, a true advantage! When we see our faculty as a unique asset, we are eager to give them the tools to better understand the business side of what we do and to weigh in on and help us develop solutions to the challenges we face. I feel deep gratitude to the faculty I work with and I appreciate their patience with my urgency and insistence. Daily, we read of institutions that have adopted a paternalistic and condescending tone towards faculty, marginalizing them on the sidelines.”

There’s a leadership philosophy I can get behind. And, I trust, it would work.

## What We Think



Rudy Perrault

What We Think

“Its not really an option, I grew up in Haiti. Union is strength. By banding together the people of Haiti were able to kick Napoleon Bonaparte out of the country. You are stronger when you are unified, you will speak with one voice and the message is heard loud and clear. By being unionized, cuts can be avoided, and the union can fight for benefit packages. It provides security, the union is able to protect and stand up for us.”



Jennifer Schultz

What We Think

“I joined the UEA to meet faculty outside my college, to learn about contractual issues, and to be informed about university policies. I discovered the value and importance of the UEA after joining the Executive Committee. I learned that UEA advocates for faculty, helps protect our academic freedom, and fights for reasonable and fair working conditions. As faculty members from academic institutions across the country start organizing, I am grateful that we have an established and strong union to represent the interests of faculty and students.”



John Hatcher

What We Think

“Its like citizenship, in this country everybody is a citizen and you can decide what that means to you. Some are citizens and decide not to vote. The union does a lot for me, the level of citizenship is being a full member, its like voting.”

## Time Was...

25 Years ago, UEA President Wayne Jesswein, wrote this in the newsletter...

“By far the most important event at this month’s Regents’ Meeting for UEAD members occurred during the President’s Report to the Regents [...] This month, in discussing activities occurring under MSPAN, the President stated and wrote, ‘MSPAN II will have very important implications for the development of the University of Minnesota, Duluth, as the second major comprehensive University campus in the state...’ This is strong support by the President for a position which UEAD has developed and advocated for the future of UMD.”

This section curates the electronic habits of one Dr. David Schimpf, who as you may know, frequently surveils the landscape of higher education and e-mails us what he sees. In case you missed them, here are a few, chosen to reflect “The Trust Issue” focus...

### “Lawmakers Are Critical of Kaler’s Priorities”

In, The Minnesota Daily, Christopher Aadland - February 19, 2015



Check out the UEA on Facebook!

## Schimpf Shelf

“Fired Administrator Says She Was Pressured to File False Charge of Sexual Harassment” In, Chronicle of Higher Education, article by Peter Schmidt - March 20th, 2015

“Professor’s Rights to Free Speech at Risk Nationwide” In, Huffington Post, article by Susan Kruth - January 25th, 2015

“Raped on Campus? Don’t Trust your College to Do the Right Thing” In, The Chronicle of Higher Education, article by Katie Rose Guest Pryal - March 2, 2015

“U, Higher Ed Deserve a Boost at State Capitol” In, Star Tribune, article by Tribune Editorial Board - January 21, 2015

### “Social Media Tests Limits of Academic Freedom”

In, v Minnesota Daily, article by Christopher Aadland - September 11, 2014

### “The Salaita Affair”

In, Counterpunch, article by Omar M. Ramahi - October 16, 2014

### “Cary Nelson’s Ongoing, if selective, War on Academic Freedom”

In, Lawyers, Guns, and Money, blog by Scott Lemieux - September 11, 2014