

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Jesus Canchola Sanchez, [jsanchez@seiu73.org](mailto:jsanchez@seiu73.org), (312) 588-7534

**[UIC worker interviews available upon request.]**

**UIC WORKERS DISRUPT BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

*Workers interrupted meeting agenda to demand the University bargain in good faith.*

**Chicago** - University of Illinois at Chicago workers, represented by SEIU Local 73, entered the meeting room in silence today to protest the University's handling of contract negotiations. Workers packed to the room wearing purple, holding signs, and led the silent protest to demand negotiations move forward in good faith.

About 4,000 clerical, professional, technical and service & maintenance workers have been without a contract for months. They work at the main campus in Chicago, the University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System, Peoria, Rockford, Champaign, and UIC Specialized Care of Children. Little progress has been made in negotiations. Currently, four contracts are being negotiated and the workers are demanding that the four contracts be negotiated as one universal contract. The University has refused to move forward on this point.

"We want to negotiate a contract that acknowledges the integrity of UIC workers. The administration has refused to offer a contract that properly invests in the staff that make the University run. We are standing together and will continue to show up wherever leadership is until we're heard. This is only the beginning. Every job and service we provide matters. We will use our collective power to win for our families and communities," said Dian Palmer, SEIU Local 73 President.

Many departments at UIC have been facing staffing shortages. Many workers are currently covering two to three vacant jobs resulting in unsafe working conditions, stress, and dissatisfaction. Facilities services cannot hire enough workers to fill all open Building Service Worker roles because they are offered a wage well below the market rate for janitorial workers.

UIC recently announced a 5% increase in revenue for the current academic year. Workers are asking how the University is investing in them as their revenue increases. University administration has often told low wage workers that it's simply too broke to afford bringing them up to market rate for their positions.

"The working class at UIC needs appropriate staffing to serve the University community. We need safe working environments and a safe community so we can all prosper together. All workers need your support to do the best job they can do without the fear of retaliation. This is a matter of integrity," Jonna Cottrell McHugh, Program and Student Advisor in the College of Engineering Career Center at UIC, speaking at the Board of Trustees meeting today. McHugh broke the rules of the meeting that state speakers may not bring up contract bargaining issues during public comments at Board of Trustees meetings. She ended her speech demanding the Board of Trustees take bargaining seriously while reminding them that they should live up to the University's guiding values of exercising responsible stewardship and being accountable for your actions.

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*SEIU Local 73 represents more than 29,000 workers, primarily in public service and publicly funded positions in school districts, municipalities, social service agencies, and many other job classifications in Illinois and Indiana. We are dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families.*