



MEDIA ADVISORY

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UIUC Service Workers Victorious in Correcting Pay, Continue to Demand Fair Contract from University

Champaign-Urbana, IL—After a number of demonstrations against the University of Illinois and months of behind-the-scenes work, service employees, backed by their union, SEIU Local 73, claim victory as Building Service Workers (BSW) who had been paid incorrectly got confirmation of correction from the university.

The union members, which feature dining service employees and BSWs, had been frustrated with the university's slow movement on correcting the pay issues, which lasted nearly a year. What should have been a quick fix for the university required the words and actions of union members to make it a reality, which angered members like Anthony Tarter, BSW: "It's obviously a good thing to get the accurate pay we've been due, but it ticks us off that it took this long. If they can't even get pay right, what else are they getting wrong?"

As part of the continued fight for a fair contract from the university during upcoming negotiations between the union and the administration, workers gathered on campus on Friday, January 14, to highlight the issues they say have been exacerbated by the university's lack of action, including staffing, safety and wage compression.

Compounding the existing issues is the current surge of COVID-19. Cases have seen a 70% increase in Champaign County alone, according to the New York Times' COVID tracker. With students, faculty and other staff having returned from the holiday break, workers are worried about a potential uptick of cases on campus, which the university has publicly said it expects.

Negotiations for both dining service and BSW contracts began November 28. SEIU Local 73 and its members hope to receive a contract from the university that adequately addresses the workers' concerns and showcases a level of transparency, commitment and respect that union members say is currently absent from UIUC.

"UI made us a cornerstone of their reopening plan, sat at home making decisions piling on additional work and putting us at risk," said Mike Lindley, BSW. "But they are fighting us on every little thing. We're going to continue to show them just how essential we are."

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SEIU Local 73 represents more than 31,000 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.