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Service Workers at UIUC Hold Move-in Day Action With Allies

Champaign-Urbana - Over 800 service workers at the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, backed by their union SEIU Local 73, are just several days away from the end of their contract on August 22, 2022. Today they gathered at the Illini Union during move-in day alongside students, sister unions and allies to hand out literature and urge the university to give these workers a fair contract.

SEIU Local 73 forced the university into mediation after UIUC refused to budge on meager wage proposals for workers. The workers, who were deemed essential and worked in-person while university leaders worked from home, believe the school's proposals show a lack of respect.

"The University hasn't met us in the middle, and we have been talking far too long. It's time to stand and fight for fair wages, owed back pay, and safer, Inclusive work environments," said Katrina Jarrett, Dining Services, union steward, and member of the bargaining committee. "We clean the buildings and feed students. Why are we treated like we don't matter?"

So far, the university has offered a 67-cent wage increase in year one for dining service workers, and 25-cents for those in building service. Workers and allies believe that is an outrage, particularly in light of UI President Timothy Killeen receiving a raise that lifted his base salary from \$600,000 to \$835,000, in addition to hundreds of thousands of dollars in bonuses.

"We're going to stand up and fight for those who deserve better," said Augustus Wood, former GEO chapter co-president and tenure track professor. "We're going to stand up and fight for all who make this campus run."

UIUC and SEIU Local 73 are set to bargain on August 19. With the contract expiring on Monday, August 22, if a deal is not reached, the union will deliver a strike notice to the university resulting in a potential strike of 800+ workers 15 or more days later.

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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.