



For Immediate Release

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UIC Workers Lead Practice Picket on May Day

Chicago, IL – Civil Service workers at the University of Illinois-Chicago held a practice picket on May 1 to demand a union contract with pay equity. Workers rallied during the picket to send a message to management that they are ready to strike for a fair contract.

“Our members are paid 21% less than state workers doing the same job. That ain’t right. Many of our Pros are paid unfairly. There’s something seriously wrong if the workers are outside the building and management is inside the building. We’re going to fight, and we’re going to win the wages our members deserve,” said Dian Palmer, President of SEIU Local 73.

UIC workers are demanding fair pay increases that honor longevity and education; pay equity for the social support workers in the Division of Specialized Care for Children; pay premiums for workers in UI Hospital and Clinics; market pay adjustments; retroactive pay; and protections against privatization for Building Service Workers in UIC Hospital. Stagnant wages have resulted in short staffing, high vacancy rates, and significant gaps in services for students and patients.

“The bargaining committee has been working hard in meetings, and we need our members and the community engaged in this fight. We need to remind them how we shut it down in 2020, how we shut down buildings, how UPS wouldn’t cross a picket line to do delivery. UIC management needs to respect us, protect us, and pay us. We may need to face some challenges, but joy comes in the morning, and we won’t give up,” said Kim Featherston.

“UIC must lift up the lowest-paid members of this union and do what an educational institution should do: support their community. They need to get this contract done in support of Local 73 members who work in UI Hospital and come to work every day to protect our communities,” said Bob Reiter, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor.

SEIU Local 73 has been in contract negotiations with UIC for ten months. In April, workers delivered a strike petition to UI President Timothy Killeen as part of a higher education lobby day. SEIU Local 73 represents nearly 4,000 Civil Service workers.

“We went on strike together at the height of COVID. We stood up for each other, and we’re here again today because we always look out for our working siblings. You deserve a fair contract just like we do. We believe you deserve to be the highest-paid techs and professionals in Chicago, and you shouldn’t stop until you get it,” said Paul Pater, Illinois Nurses Association.

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SEIU Local 73 represents more than 34,000 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.