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UIUC Building and Food Service Workers On Strike Hold Campus Rally

Champaign, IL – Hundreds of UIUC Food and Building Service Workers held a rally on the Main Quad alongside campus allies. SEIU Local 73 represents nearly 800 workers who have been on strike since September 23, demanding a union contract with living wages.

At the last negotiation session on September 23, UIUC management made an offer with smaller wage increases than the deal members previously voted down.

“When UIUC doesn’t respect us, we must be visible and tell the students the truth. I believe that you will win, and I believe that we will make UIUC know that you are the backbone of this university,” said **Dian Palmer, SEIU Local 73 President**.

BSWs and FSWs are some of the lowest-paid workers on campus. U of I President Timothy Killeen earns \$917,000 annually.

“Building and Food Service workers are uncomfortable every day we work. We are not getting paid what we deserve, and we’re being overworked because we are so short-staffed. There’s no reason why a top-10 university like UIUC can’t afford to pay us better wages. We shouldn’t have to work two or more jobs to raise a family,” said **Melody Decker, Chapter 119 President and Building Service Worker**.

UIUC students have reported long lines on social media in the dining halls and dirty bathrooms.

“In as little as three days on strike, this billion-dollar operation begins to unravel without Food and Building Service workers. Dining services are backed up, facilities are disgusting, and trash is piling up on campus. UIUC cannot run without your work, and you deserve a fair contract,” said **Andy Stec, Graduate Employees' Organization at UIUC**.

“If the students are paying tuition and Food and Building Service workers are doing the work every day, then why are the people at the top the only ones getting paid? If this billion-dollar business is making a profit, then they should be shared with the workers who make the university run,” said **Aaron Ammons, Champaign County Clerk**

After the rally, the crowd marched through the Illini Union building and across campus to the Swanlund Administration Building.

Bargaining continues on Thursday, September 26, and Friday, September 27.

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SEIU Local 73 represents more than 35,000 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.