



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** Eric Bailey, [ebailey@seiu73.org](mailto:ebailey@seiu73.org)

## **UIUC Food and Building Service Workers Kick-Off Strike**

**Champaign, IL**—Nearly 800 Food and Building Service Workers went on strike at picket sites across campus starting at 7 AM on September 23. Management and SEIU Local 73 held a bargaining session in the afternoon, during which UIUC proposed a smaller offer than the deals rejected by members: a \$1/hr raise for the first year, 0.75 cents for year two, and 0.75 cents for year three. The deal also included rising parking fees for workers.

“It’s a shame that UIUC is sliding backward in bargaining on the first day of the strike,” **said Joseph Richert, SEIU Local 73 Secretary-Treasurer.** “After blatantly intimidating our members in the days leading up to the strike, UIUC continues to disrespect and undervalue the work our members do daily for the University.”

On the first day of the strike, support from other unions and community groups poured in. Members of the Iron Workers Union stopped construction on the Illini Union in solidarity with the strike. Teamsters Local 26 refused to cross a picket line and canceled their scheduled contract negotiations with UIUC. The Chairman of the Champaign Democratic Party, Central Illinois Jobs with Justice, and UIUC Food Not Bombs all dropped off food for striking workers. A community-run [GoFundMe](#) to support striking workers reached \$15,000.

On the **UIUC subreddit**, UIUC students have been reporting moldy bread and long lines in the dining halls. UIUC students on campus have joined picket lines and distributed flyers in solidarity with the strike.

“The U of I system just approved a new budget of over \$8 Billion. President Killeen got a \$400,000 bonus last year. And yet, we have been forced to go on strike or threaten to strike repeatedly for the last 11 years. UIUC appears to have money for everyone at the top while giving nothing to those of us who keep our university running,” **said Melody Decker, Chapter 119 President and Building Service Worker.**

Research by the University of Illinois Project for Middle-Class Renewal reveals that public university employees are paid 21% less than their counterparts at other state agencies. Meanwhile, U of I President Timothy Killeen is among the top ten highest-paid public university presidents, with a \$1.3 million salary for FY2024-2025.

Negotiations continue on September 26.

**###**

*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.*