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## UVM Faculty Union Negotiations To Begin



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University of Vermont faculty say the administration has reneged on a promise to hire more tenured faculty and pay more competitive salaries. The allegation comes as the two sides begin contract negotiations.

United Academics represents about 700 full-time faculty at UVM. Union leaders held a news conference to propose raising UVM's commitment to tenured faculty, which they charge has been short changed. They say UVM's commitment doesn't match the much-used word "vision" -- to describe all the new building on campus -- like the Davis Student center.



David Shiman, a founding member of United Academics, the SFT-affiliated UVM Faculty Union, said, "But you've got to push a little deeper beyond the vision, beyond the rhetoric of the vision, to look at some of the realities, and say, what is going on?"



Union members say the number of tenured faculty has not kept pace with the growth of tuition revenues, while UVM's undergraduate enrollment has grown 28% since the first faculty contract was signed six years ago. The union proposes to create a Faculty Investment Fund, to be dedicated to hiring new tenure track faculty. Ross Thomson, United Academics Chief Negotiator, told WCAX News, "We're proposing a small fund, which would be implemented slowly, so that it won't come as a big hit on the University. We're thinking of a fund to increase the commitment to tenured faculty by about two percent annually."

But a separate fund dedicated to faculty salaries can be expected to encounter opposition from the UVM administration. Spokesman Enrique Corredera told reporters, "There is no need to establish a separate fund."

Top officials at UVM aren't commenting, citing the upcoming negotiations. But Corredera says UVM is actually ahead of schedule in terms of the tenured faculty it promised to hire at the beginning of president Dan Fogel's ten-year strategic plan.

Corredera said, "Over that period of time, we believe that we have made significant gains and hope to be in a position to make even more gains as we go into the next contract."

In spite of apparent disagreement between the faculty and administration on details, both sides say labor-management relations at UVM have improved since the two sides negotiated their first and second three-year contracts. They hope to agree on the next contract by the end of the current semester.

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