



March 26, 2019

President Ana Mari Cauce
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Seattle, WA 98195
pres@uw.edu

Dear President Cauce:

We write to bring to your attention a grave concern regarding negotiations between the UWHA and the UW negotiation team, headed by Mr. Banks Evans of Labor Relations. During the first round of UWHA contract negotiations, the UWHA and UW administration held over forty bargaining sessions after business hours to avoid negatively impacting patient care. This was agreed upon by both parties as commonsense and ethical.

This year, Mr. Evans has demanded that we bargain during business hours. His reasoning: he has too many meetings scheduled during daytime hours. He argued that if we schedule evening meetings, his day schedule could run long, and he could be late to UWHA bargaining sessions. UWHA has reached out to Dr. Joyner and other members of GME administration in an attempt to understand any other motivation for this, in our opinion, unreasonable demand. To date we have been given no other explanation. Thus we are reaching out to you.

UWHA has been clear about our opposition to bargain when we would otherwise be caring for our patients and learning. We estimate as many as 500 patients could be affected, with even more affected if bargaining takes longer than anticipated. People may have appointments canceled, or be transferred to unfamiliar doctors. Our overworked colleagues will have to cross cover in our absence. Patient handoffs, one of the largest sources of medical error, will increase. Lastly, the UWHA representatives will miss valuable educational experiences. These concerns were met with a “compromise” to start half of the sessions at noon, and the others after business hours. Notably, the majority of our outpatient clinics start at 1 pm, so these will be missed.

On the surface, this proposal appears reasonable, but compromising patient care in any way is unacceptable, and UWHA has drawn a line. UW patients—our patients—should not pay *any* consequence for contract negotiations. On this we are united, and hope you feel the same. After all, first on the list of UW Medicine’s own commitments to its patients is that UW will “put your needs first.” This past Friday, March 22, 2019, UWMC activated “code zebra” due to an unprecedented number of patients awaiting inpatient and ICU beds. With the hospital critically full, Mr. Evans and GME administrators continue to assert no issues would come of daytime bargaining, a bewildering position.

For three months, we have gone to great lengths to find a compromise. We even offered to meet on weekends. This option was initially verbally accepted, then later rejected without a given reason. We care about UW, our programs, and our patients. We are reaching out to you hoping you can intervene, as our questions have not been answered.

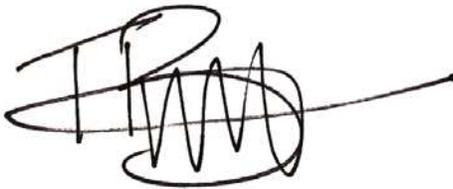
We have been referred back to Labor Relations on these issues every time we ask the stakeholders. We hope at the very least to hear back directly from you, the President, as to your position on these matters.

Specifically, we would like the following questions answered:

1. Why is the UW bargaining team opposed to meeting after-hours?
2. Why are they *now* opposed when they were previously happy to meet more than 40 prior sessions after-hours?
3. Who will give an explanation to our patients when appointments are canceled or care is transferred?
4. What is this explanation?
5. UW GME's Professional Policy clearly states that "Residents and fellows [...] are *first and foremost* learners and are expected to pursue the acquisition of competencies that will qualify them for careers in their chosen specialties." Why do collective bargaining responsibilities trump this?

On behalf of the nearly 1,400 resident and fellow members of UWHA, we thank you for providing an opportunity to bring these ongoing concerns to your office. We are grateful in advance of your careful consideration and eagerly await your timely written response to our questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracy Burns', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tracy Burns, MD
President
University of Washington Housestaff Association