



## Member Update—December 26, 2025

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Dear Colleagues,

As we look toward the new year, I'd like to thank the many, many AAUP-UD members who work on our behalf, including our Steering Committee, Department Representatives, Executive Council, and Office Manager, Karren Helsel. We worked this year to protect faculty safety, academic freedom, and individual expression. We showed you the true state of UD finances, and how academic revenue has been diverted to new buildings, investments, and upper administration payroll.

I would like to express solidarity with our fellow union employees in AFSCME 439 and 3472 and FOP Lodge 7, who are negotiating new contracts this year along with us. Local 439 members (custodians, groundskeepers, and movers) are dealing with drastic cuts to their numbers, which you may have experienced firsthand. Relative to our [comparators](#), these employees serve about 25% more people and earn 11% less. Local 3472 (skilled maintenance workers) protect us from electrical hazards, black mold, and toxic air among other dangerous conditions. Their salaries trail those of comparators by 5%, while they serve 7% more people.

I am grateful for the discipline, integrity, and valor of our UD Police at this exceptionally demanding time. UD Police (FOP Lodge 7) have been working at significantly below their recommended safety complement for several years. Recently, they faced a shocking threat directed toward them by a person looking to carry out a mass casualty attack. The tragic events at Brown demonstrate that undervaluing campus police puts officers and the community at risk. UDPD have identical law-enforcement credentials to those of comparable police agencies, but shamefully, in current negotiations they are being offered starting salaries that are 16% lower than peer law-enforcement agencies.

We are all on the front line, teaching, researching, mentoring and protecting our students. We very much hope that all of our essential contributions will be honored at the bargaining table and that the new year will bring better working conditions for all of us.

Best for a restful and safe New Year,

Persephone

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## Bargaining Update

Thus far, the AAUP-UD's bargaining team has met twice with the administration's team. In our 8/26/25 update, we listed the members of the AAUP-UD's team and their qualifications; our team members' names may also be found on our [website](#). Below is a list of the members of the administration's team:

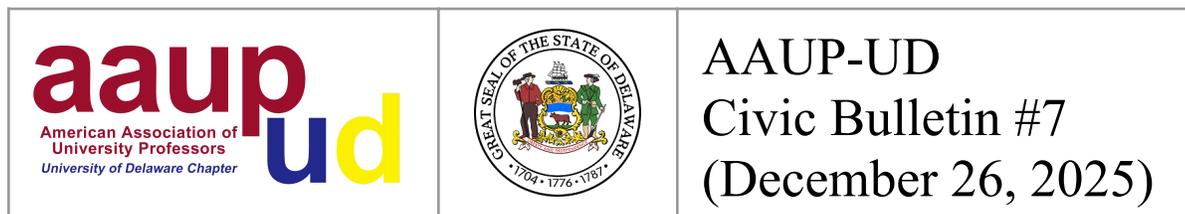
- Bob Nagle: Outside Counsel, Fox Rothschild Philadelphia
- Dalinda Carrero-Papi: Sr. Director, Employee & Labor Relations
- Dana Veron: Associate Provost for Faculty Development, Faculty Affairs
- Pam Norris: Dean, College of Engineering
- Jacob Bowman, Associate Dean of Research, College of Agriculture & Natural Resources
- Chad Gasta: Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, College of Arts & Sciences
- Amy Shultz: Manager, IT PMO (Project Manager & Notetaker)
- John Crouser: Manager, Employee & Labor Relations

Like the AAUP-UD’s team, the administration’s team is taking direction from a steering committee. The names of the AAUP-UD’s Steering Committee members may be found on our [website](#); the names of the administration’s steering committee members have not been shared. The operating procedures adopted by the AAUP-UD’s Steering Committee for creating and responding to proposals were shared with the administration’s team in the first bargaining session, but the administration’s team did not share any procedures mandated by its steering committee. Also in the first bargaining session, the administration’s team proposed a detailed list of 19 “ground rules” for both sides to follow during negotiations. Some of these rules proved objectionable to the AAUP-UD’s team, so these rules were not adopted.

At the second bargaining session, the AAUP-UD made seven proposals to the administration. Most of these involve clarifications to language in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) that has been or might be misinterpreted or narrowly interpreted to the detriment of faculty. The administration has presented two proposals that would provide chairs with greater flexibility in the scheduling and assignment of classes. All these proposals are currently under review by each team and their respective steering committees and will be the subject of continued discussion in the upcoming January meetings. Proposals involving faculty salary and benefits will likely be discussed in February and March.

### **National AAUP Activism**

The national AAUP has been one of the most active organizations in the nation in resisting recent attempts to roll back academic freedom, defund academic research, and suppress freedom of speech. It has filed eight lawsuits in the past year, including ones to stop executive orders banning DEI initiatives, the mass termination of federal grant money for research, and the detention and/or deportation of noncitizen students and faculty members for exercising First Amendment rights. Many of these lawsuits have yet to go to trial, but several have resulted in preliminary injunctions, including [one to prevent the federal government from withdrawing approximately \\$500 million of research funding to the UC system](#). So, while the AAUP-UD does not agree with every position taken or tactic utilized by the national AAUP, we nonetheless recognize its vital role in protecting higher education in the U.S.



[Academic Freedom Field Guide | AAUP](#)

This occasional series seeks to inform AAUP-UD members about relevant developments in state and local government policies in Delaware.

~Dael Norwood, History Dept. & AAUP-UD Steering Committee

## State Budget

The Delaware state budgeting process for FY 2027 is now underway. In November, the Office of Management and Budget, an executive agency, held public hearings where state agencies and public institutions – like UD – presented their initial budget requests. Based on these requests, the OMB will prepare the Governor’s Recommended Budget (unveiled in January), which will set the terms upon which the legislature will debate spending legislation, through Joint Finance Committee hearings (Feb-March) and in markup (April-May), with a final budget passing – hopefully – in June (See: [diagram of the DE budget cycle](#)).

### UD OMB Hearing Presentation ([slides](#); [narrative](#))

On Tues., Nov. 18, 2025, then-interim President Carlson presented UD’s request to the OMB board, assisted by then-interim Provost William Farquhar and then-Interim EVP of Finance and Administration Carol Kissal.

To underline the presentation’s core theme – “Delaware’s priorities drive UD’s requests” – Carlson detailed her ongoing efforts to meet with diverse stakeholders across the state, and emphasized how increased state aid to UD would develop the state’s workforce, especially in nursing and teaching.

Citing an as-yet unreleased study, Carlson also touted UD’s “\$2.4 billion” impact on Delaware’s economy – though she did not note that figure marked a precipitous \$800 million dollar drop (~\$872m with inflation) from the university’s last economic impact study, issued after she joined UD as provost ([“UD’s \\$3.2 billion economic impact in Delaware.”](#) *UDaily*, November 3, 2022).

For FY 2027, UD’s top administrators requested a \$25m in increased YoY capital funding from the state, and a \$4.5m increase in ongoing operating funds – in total, a \$29.5m increase over last year’s state funding of \$148m. (NB: while UD officials followed the university’s unusual practice of merging capital and operating funds together, the specifics of projects mentioned in the presentation made the distinction clear.)

*Cf.* Joe Irizarry, [“Delaware State University Had Its Time before the State Office of Management and Budget.”](#) *Delaware Public Media*, November 16, 2025

## News of Note

### José Ignacio Castañeda Perez, [“Delaware Lawmakers Seek to Strip Incentives from Avelo over ICE Flights.”](#) *Spotlight Delaware*, December 18, 2025

“Delaware lawmakers will introduce legislation this week to strip financial incentives from Avelo Airlines unless they stop conducting deportation flights amid the Trump administration’s ramped-up removal tactics.

State Sen. Ray Seigfried (D-North Brandywine) and Rep. Mara Gorman (D-Newark) will file a bill Thursday that would also bar the Delaware Department of Transportation from working with airlines that deport people without a valid judicial warrant or demonstration of due process. That would essentially prevent the use of state-owned resources like Wilmington Airport for such uses, but wouldn’t end Avelo’s service in Delaware. ... Senate Bill 207 would amend two sections of the Delaware Code to allow for the enforcement of these accountability standards regarding deportations at state airport facilities by the Delaware Department of Justice. Any commercial airlines taking part in deportations would also be disqualified from receiving an aviation jet fuel tax exemption under the bill.”

See also:

- Kaitlyn Cupelli, [“Delaware Lawmakers Introduce Legislation to Combat Federal Immigration Actions.”](#) *Delaware State News*, December 17, 2025

- Megan McGrath, [“Local Interest Groups Protest the University’s Use of Avelo Airlines amid Deportations.”](#) *The Review*, November 18, 2025
  - “On April 20, 2023, Avelo Airlines announced its partnership with the university’s athletics department across multiple sports, including football and basketball, which has now expired. ... ‘I would like to see my alma mater take a stand, and this is what I said to the president and the AD,’ she [Marti Yates] said. ‘I think it would be a very brave, but a very welcome stance if the university put out a statement saying that we will not be contracting with Avelo in light of their cooperation and their contracts with ICE.’ She has not yet heard back from Interim President Laura Carlson about her concerns with the use of Avelo Airlines.”
- Brianna Hill, [“Amid ICE Controversy, Public Dollars Pay for Avelo Marketing in Delaware.”](#) *Spotlight Delaware*, November 21, 2025

**Lauren Boyd, [“Exclusive: Who Is Laura Carlson? The University’s Next President on Her Journey to the Presidency and Her Plans to Realign the University.”](#) *The Review*, December 12, 2025**

“On Tuesday, Carlson was named the 29th president of the university, effective Jan. 1. She will be the second woman to hold the permanent position. ... Carlson’s vision for the university is hinged on budgetary and cultural recalibration to align with university values. ... ‘We need to think about the relative weight of how much we put into administrative roles or those funds [and] where we can put that to support students,’ Carlson said. ‘I think those are really important questions that I’m inviting within our team, you know, have we gotten out of line?’ ... Carlson suggests that community-focused work like ‘Becoming OneUD’ (or ‘OurUD’ as she now calls it) and CCE will continue into the future. ‘It’s an ongoing project of love, for sure,’ she said.”

**Josh Shannon, [“New UD President Pledges to Improve University’s Relationship with the City of Newark.”](#) *Newark Post*, December 11, 2025**

“New University of Delaware President Laura Carlson is vowing to improve UD’s relationship with the city it calls home. ‘I highly value the relationship, and I think that we need to do some work on it from our end,’ Carlson said during a press conference Wednesday, one day after being named the university’s 29th president. ... Carlson takes over the helm of UD at a time when there have been rocky moments in the relationship between the university and the City of Newark. ... Carlson also signaled a willingness to consider building more on-campus housing.”

See also:

- Jacob Owens, [“New University of Delaware President Carlson Seeks Recalibration.”](#) *Spotlight Delaware*, December 11, 2025
- Katie Tabeling, [“UD President Carlson Looks to Prioritize Fiscal Stability in Her Tenure.”](#) *Delaware Business Times*, December 10, 2025.

**Josh Shannon, [“Laura Carlson Named the 29th President of the University of Delaware.”](#) *Newark Post*, December 9, 2025**

“... Carlson becomes the 29th president of the university. She is the first woman to be appointed to the position on a permanent basis, though Nancy Targett served as acting president for a year in 2015. ... In her time as interim president, Carlson has hosted several town hall meetings with students and faculty to talk about the future of the university and how to better create a sense of community among different groups at UD. Laying out her vision for the university on Tuesday, Carlson said UD’s mission is to ‘inquire with impact’ by using its research and resources to create solutions that meet the needs of the community, state, nation and world.”

See also:

- [“Laura A. Carlson Appointed UD President.”](#) *UDaily*, December 9, 2025
- Terri Kelly, Chair, University of Delaware Board of Trustees, [“Dr. Laura A. Carlson Appointed University of Delaware’s 29th President.”](#) December 9, 2025,
- Katie Tabeling, [“UD Names Carlson As Its Next President.”](#) *Delaware Business Times*, December 9, 2025
- Kelly Powers, [“University of Delaware Names Second Woman President in over 280 Years.”](#) *The News Journal*, December 9, 2025
  - [NB: The University of Delaware [was incorporated in 1833](#) as Newark College – making it only 192 years old – *ed.*]

**Josh Shannon, [“Relocated Christmas Tree Now Aglow at Newark’s City Hall; Winterfest Set for Friday.”](#) *Newark Post*, December 4, 2025**

“The City of Newark’s Christmas tree has a new address but is still glistening just as bright. The 20-foot tree is now aglow on the lawn in front of city hall, at the corner of South Main Street and Apple Road, rather than its traditional spot on Main Street’s Academy Lawn.

The Academy Lawn tree had been the focal point of the holiday season in downtown Newark since 1995. However, this year, the University of Delaware, which owns the lawn, told the city it would no longer allow the tree or any other holiday displays to be located there for more than one day. UD’s decision was a result of the university’s broader Campus Culture and Engagement Initiative, according to Vice President for Student Life José-Luis Riera, who is leading the initiative.”

**Ethan Grandin and Alex Keating, [“Letter from the Editors.”](#) *The Review*, November 18, 2025**

“When Interim President Laura Carlson was announced to be taking office in May, our staff began communication to schedule an interview with her. ... In October, after continued postponements, we were told that no interview would take place until after the board of trustees meets in December to select a new president. ... Although Carlson has expressed interest in meeting individual staff members, there has been no willingness to do so on the record or in an interview. Throughout her tenure thus far, there has been no profile published with any Delaware media outlet.”

**Nick Stonesifer, [“Thomas Jefferson University Signs with Delaware to Expand Medical Education.”](#) *Spotlight Delaware*, November 14, 2025**

“When Gov. Matt Meyer outlined a \$1 billion proposal earlier this week to expand rural health care access, building a medical school in the First State was a pillar of his plan. He said the state would seek out competitive bids from universities to ultimately operate Delaware’s first medical school. But a weeks-old signed agreement indicates Delaware is already in talks with Thomas Jefferson University, home to one of Philadelphia’s premier medical schools.”

**Jennifer Antonik, [“DSU Signs Deal with Education Tech Company to Expand Online Degrees.”](#) *Delaware Business Times*, December 17, 2025**

“Delaware State University is expanding access to online degree programs through a partnership with education technology company Risepoint. The collaboration will make DSU the first institution in the eHBCU consortium to broaden its online program offerings through a third-party education technology partner. ... Under the agreement, Risepoint will support the development and growth of workforce-focused online degree programs designed to meet employer demand in fields such as business, education and public service. The expanded programs are expected to launch in fall 2026.”