

What's happening at Harvard?

An update for staff, faculty and students from The Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers

Harvard is changing, as new University leaders push in new directions and adjust to new economic realities. The working lives of Harvard staff are changing as well. Members of the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers are much more concerned today, about employment security and family finances, than they were several years ago.

University leaders are pursuing an aggressive growth agenda, centered on two areas: building an Allston campus and expanding science research. The Allston campus is a huge undertaking. Nearly \$100 million per year is being set aside from endowment earnings, every year for the next 20 years, for planning and construction of the new campus. Just as ambitious is Harvard's push to greater levels and new areas of science research. HMS and FAS are building enormous new high-tech research buildings and recruiting dozens of new science faculty stars.

This two-pronged push is both exciting and worrisome for many in the Harvard community. On the one hand, new scientific research has undeniable societal benefits. Furthermore, the creation of a whole new Harvard "city" in Allston presents opportunities: to build "green," to increase housing supply, to create new jobs, and to develop beautiful new Harvard facilities.

On the other hand, aggressive (and expensive) pursuit of this new agenda is leading to financial pressures on other areas of University activity. Central administrative offices, libraries and museums have faced severe budgeting restrictions in the past year. All of these areas have reduced staffing and cut services. In some cases, staff have lost their jobs. Other non-research functions will surely face similar pressures in the next year.

All of the Harvard's citizens – faculty, students, staff, alumni – should be interested in a central question for the University's next era: what will Harvard be giving up in order to build the Allston campus and expand science research on this ambitious schedule?

How is HUCTW working with the "new Harvard" in contract negotiations? Union and University leaders are meeting every week, aiming to negotiate a new Agreement to take effect July 1, 2004. Realities of the current Harvard environment, as described above, lead to some challenging workplace policy questions. Negotiations about wages and work security in particular have been intense. Fortunately, the HUCTW negotiating team (elected back in October) and Harvard representatives are strongly committed to a constructive, "problem-solving" approach. Union members, in meetings, surveys and conversations over the past year, have expressed clear goals:

- We need to make solid economic progress. Harvard staff should have salary increases that keep up with the cost of living **and** move us ahead, rewarding the constant skill-building and adapting required in our changing workplace.
- Employment security should be a sure thing. As the University moves in new directions, some jobs are eliminated. At the same time, new jobs are created. We need to strengthen our Work Security program, to make certain that Harvard staff facing elimination of their jobs will have the opportunity to move into new or open jobs, without losing income.
- We intend to continue building support for staff training and education – both financial support for tuition and fees, and paid time to participate in education on the job. Learning at work is more important all the time, as our workplace changes.
- We also hope to introduce innovative programs to help staff with the difficulties of the housing market in the Boston area.

As we have for sixteen years, HUCTW seeks to improve the working lives of our members while supporting Harvard's endeavors and building community. We believe the University can pursue its exciting new agenda and, at the same time, maintain the strength of core activities, including secure employment and middle-class opportunities for a capable, committed staff.

Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers
"Harvard Works Because We Do – 4,800 Strong"