<u>**Conflict Resolution Practice–DRAFT 11.6.22**</u>

Informed by Restorative Justice Principles and Practices

Among the Principles of Community we have collectively developed and committed to as members of UC-AFT are:

- The highest standards of inclusivity, dignity and respect toward all.
- Promoting and supporting a community where all people can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of abusive, degrading, or belittling treatment.
- Acting as necessary to promote and uphold these principles.

Occasionally, when conflict arises between union members, we need to find a way to resolve the conflict. While we may not always succeed, as unionists in solidarity with each other we should try to find a path to reconciliation.

Our restorative justice response and any subsequent actions should:

- Be proportional to the harm caused. Relatively minor conflicts such as microaggressions and communication breakdowns typically require lighter interventions than major complaints about harassment and abuse.
- Invite voluntary involvement.
- Empower participants.
- Encourage collaborative decision-making.
- Support the values expressed in our Principles of Community.
- Remain confidential.

Step 1: The Executive Director and one Executive Board member not involved in the harm and appointed by the President (who may self-appoint) will act as facilitators and have a conversation with the harmed person (or people). At the request of the harmed person, the President may appoint two other facilitators in lieu of the Executive Director and Executive Board member. However, it is valuable for the facilitators to have training and experience in leading restorative justice circles.

Step 2: The Executive Director and Executive Board member will have a conversation with the person (or people) responding to the reported harm.

In Steps 1 and 2, topics to cover include (note that this is not an exhaustive list):

- What happened?
- What harm occurred?

- Does the person accept responsibility for causing the harm?
- What can be done to repair the harm?
- What resolutions are possible and/or ideal?
- How can trust be rebuilt?

Step 3: A restorative justice circle is convened consisting of all people involved in the harm, the Executive Director, and the Executive Board member. The harmed and responding persons have the option of inviting a support person to the circle, who may participate as little or as much as desired. The focus of the circle is on mitigating harm, facilitating accountability (defined as taking responsibility and acting to make amends), repairing relationships, and rebuilding trust.

During the circle:

- Each person tells their story, describing the event and its impact on them, to foster a comprehensive understanding of the incident.
- Participants determine what harms occurred. Harms generally may be classified as physical/material, emotional/spiritual, relational/communal, or professional/reputational. Multiple types of harm can occur simultaneously.
- The group determines possible ways to repair those harms.
- The participants agree upon the specific actions to be taken to make amends. The outcome of any restorative justice circle is unique to that group but might include an apology, some form of restitution, a commitment to act or speak differently in the future, a memo or letter, an adoption of or revision to a policy or practice, communicative boundaries, voluntary resignation from elected office, or any number of other remedies.

Step 4: The participants in the restorative justice circle implement the agreed-upon resolution, facilitated by the Executive Director and Executive Board member.

In rare cases where the harms are severe and the responding person (or people) opts not to participate in the supportive conflict resolution practice outlined above, the UC-AFT Council may vote to adopt a resolution expressing its view of the harm and reaffirming our collective commitment to our Principles of Community. Care must be taken so that this option, even when it expresses the unacceptability of severe harms, is not used to shun members.