January 1, 2014

Dear Fellow Pilots,

This week, FAR Part 117 for United Airlines came in like a lion. Several weeks ago, in anticipation, we created an ALPA Part 117 team composed of SSC, Negotiating Committee, JIT, and Grievance Committee members to assist our pilots and protect our contract. We have this team in place continuously at Willis Tower from December 27 until sometime in January. The team is monitoring the crew desk on the floor and helping schedulers give the correct guidance to our pilots, auditing trips and pairings for legalities and contract compliance (yes, there have been many corrected errors), reviewing FAA guidance and compliance (some of which is coming in daily and literally less than an hour before affected departures), and answering Pilot Data Reporting (PDR) and your Local Council representatives’ questions.

The primary purpose of the team is to ensure that you, the pilots, are getting the support you need. All of your time-critical questions are being answered almost immediately by members of the team. It is the company’s responsibility to communicate how they intend to run their operation. We are gathering the frequently asked questions from our pilots and pushing the company to put out correct and complete communication such as “How do I find open trips in CCS?” and “How do I find the FIFO list in CCS?” It is our responsibility to ensure that the company does communicate, that they are in compliance with our contract and that our pilots are protected. The grievance process alone, while successful, is delayed justice and doesn’t get our pilots home on time today or tomorrow.

Thanks to your PDRs and your Council officers’ reports, the team is able to continually identify issues and work swiftly to correct them. Our SMEs have been working every day for the last several weeks, and lately literally around the clock here in Chicago, sorting out all the changes. Issues are cropping up non-stop as many have already experienced, and our team is stretched thin, accounting for unforeseen problems that were not rigorously tested previously by the company despite our protests. The impending weather affecting the Northeast and Chicago will stress Part 117 to the maximum. Today, I added more members to the team to keep up.

We drafted several communications to highlight or point to some of the major changes and where to find them. A lot of change is occurring hourly, VERID being an example, and Monday’s FAA ruling on 30/168 (30 hours free in the last 168 hours) being another. There are issues we have been pressing for weeks but the company couldn’t or wouldn’t resolve them until just recently.

As we said before, it is the company’s responsibility to adequately educate the pilots where
procedures or information sources have changed. For our part, your union has been hard at work producing helpful tools such as the contract legality guides. The Negotiating Committee and JIT have published a series of “Next Steps” that have highlighted changes to the contract as they occurred. We are making these and ALPA’s updated “Guide to Part 117 Flight Time Limitations and Rest Requirements” available in printed copies in our bases. (Click Here for an online version and Here for a .pdf version). Our communications will continue to highlight areas of immediate interest to pilots.

We are still operating with many unknowns because of delays in contract implementation, FAA interpretations, simultaneous turn-on of multiple computer systems and company attempted workarounds and band aid fixes rather than long-term solutions. We are hopeful that management will eventually recognize the greater value of including ALPA early in collaborative efforts and are serious about “improving the way we work together.” We are not going to leave our pilots hanging with only a message of “Good Luck” as they enter their cockpits.

We Are United.

[Signature]

Captain Jay Heppner
Chairman, United Master Executive Council